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*Ed. Storer*

'83 TO '87

# IN THE SOUDAN

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF SIR WILLIAM HEWETT'S  
MISSION TO KING JOHN OF ABYSSINIA

BY  
A B WYLDE

VOL II

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## CHAPTER I.

### MISSIONARIES AND PAGEANTS.

THE Swedish missionaries have, perhaps, been the most successful, and as they have no Consul to bother them they set about their affairs in a quiet manner, which extends now only to the Mission at Moncollou. They had one in Mensa, which they have given up. King John was obliged to forbid them his country, as if he made an exception in their favour other nations would have asked for the same rights. The Swedish mission is a very well conducted establishment. It gives its pupils a very useful education, combined with some trade, either as blacksmiths, carpenters, or masons. All the girls are taught cooking, sewing, and household work. The Spanish Government have sent an envoy to Abyssinia, but what he went for no one knows. The Russians sent an envoy about the time of the last Turkish and Russian War. The Germans sent a messenger with presents to King John, and the Greek Consul at Suez is always going backwards and forwards; what good he has done except to enrich himself it is hard to find out. There are few or no Greeks worth mentioning in the country, and

doubtless it has been the Consul's mission to impress upon the King that Greece was once a nation, and a very big one, and that they were heathens. I believe there is some similarity between the religions of the two countries, and certainly the priests of both countries are dirty and unwashed. The Greek Consul was the only person who could have informed King John about Colonel Gordon. There is no doubt that he put it into King John's head to get a port out of the European Powers, and he was greatly enraged when King John did not demand one.

Colonel Gordon was thwarted on his Abyssinian mission, and I attribute his failure greatly to the intrigues of Europeans, as Gordon might have overcome King John's reasons for not making peace if he and the King had been the only persons present. At the time he went up, the French, Russians, Spaniards, and Italians had all been hovering 'round, and the Greek Consul was present, and the nonsense they had filled his head with, what they had told the King he was, and what he could do, made him no doubt think that any negotiations from the hated Moslem, whom he had conquered, demanded more witnesses, a different envoy, and more solemn ratification than Gordon's mission, which was of the poorest description. I have had conversations with Ras Aloula and many other influential Abyssinians on what they require politically, and I never heard them express any other wish than to be left alone to mind their own affairs, and not have other people's religions and teachings thrust down their throats. What Italy expects to get out of the country as a non-commercial nation I do not know. She can set up no chief politically, as on Alamayou's death the country had no other prince it cared about to put in King John's place, and it would have been gross ingrati-

tude on its part, after the way King John brought them through everything, to have replaced him by an untried man. Had such a man been found, all King John's relations, and those who had served him and the country faithfully since the 1868 expedition, would have been removed from their posts. The nation would have again fallen into small "Governorates," and would have been in a state of confusion.

I suppose what I now write will be called rank heresy, and unpopular with all of the Missionary Societies, but I think in common justice to the Abyssinians that as they have had mud thrown at them, and their King has been called monster, tiger, brute, and nearly all the names of the animals in Noah's Ark, besides those not found in European dictionaries, to denote a cruel and bloodthirsty wretch, that someone should tell the truth about him. I am perfectly unbiassed in my opinion. I respect a good Christian, a good Moslem, a good Hindoo, a good savage, or a good man of any other religion or race. I do not respect those who interfere with other people's religion, and try to thrust their own religion upon others. The pioneer missionary who goes among savages who know no God, has my sincere sympathies. A missionary who goes among people who know God, and says, "I and my religion is the only one. You will be burnt, damned for ever and ever if you don't do as I do,"\* is not the class of man that is to be looked up to. If the Moslems sent missionaries to London they would get lots of recruits, as long as they paid, fed, and clothed those recruits; so would the Buddhists, and I daresay so would King John, only his religion punishes adultery by death, which would be too sweeping a reform for our civilized nineteenth century, and would be, perhaps, less

\* As was said by a Missionary to King John.

popular than the Moslem's, who allow plurality of wives. King John, like a sensible man, knows that his country is not ready for the teachings of European missionaries. He, his ancestors, his people and their ancestors, have been contented with the form of Christianity so long a custom in his country, and he does not want to change it. Any form of Christian religion practised by European missionaries, backed up by money, will get any quantity of lambs to feed and clothe, and as generally the worst class of Abyssinian goes to them, and they get protected, no matter what wrong they have done, and once a lamb always a lamb, therefore the King does not choose to be interfered with, and, instead of looking at the Foreign Missions as blessings to be encouraged, he looks upon them as unmitigated bores to be got rid of.

The merchant who trades with a country that has no treaty with England goes at his own risk and peril, and he knows it. If by upright conduct and dealing honestly with the natives he gets respected, and then some tyrant drives him out, he will find sympathizers. If, on the contrary, he sells rubbish and cheats the inhabitants, he has none. The missionary goes to the country uninvited, as he is paid for his work, and he goes by his own free will. If by living quietly and talking over his servants to pray with him, teach them their work or a trade, and make better members of society of them, and therefore better Christians, and do all this on the quiet without parade and singing of hymns to annoy his neighbours, and clashing of bells to let the natives and authorities know that he prays five times a day, he will be left alone, and King John will be thankful to him that he is of use to his country. If, on the contrary, he dresses in the absurd fashion that clergymen insist upon

dressing in, rings his bell, sings his hymns, and goes against the law of the country in which he is residing and tries to get lambs to join him, he is not better than the dishonest merchant. It serves him right if he gets turned out from the country. In him I see no martyr before me, but an intolerant, unmitigated bore. A class of missionaries have been to Abyssinia and have been turned out, and as the country has suffered from them, and they have mixed themselves up in politics and matters that did not concern them, they have no one to thank but themselves for what has occurred.

King John has never burnt, crucified, or practised any of the horrors of the inquisition as the Catholics have done; nor has he slaughtered people who are not of his religion. What he did do after the Egyptian war was to expel all Moslems from his dominions, and he had just cause to do so. All those Moslems who liked to turn Christians could stay, and many did. The restriction has now been withdrawn, and King John has some useful Moslems in his country. It is not to be expected that he can be very liberal in his dealings, considering how he has been treated, and he has shown a great deal of forbearance for a "savage" and a "bloodthirsty tiger." For a traveller the country is not a dangerous one. Say "Please," and "Have I the permission to do so-and-so?" and "Will you help me?" and you can go anywhere and do anything. Say "shall," and "I will do this—it is my right," and you will go nowhere, except over the frontier whence you came.

The French and Greek missions arrived just before the King got to Adowa, and the Admiral entertained both the Consuls several times. They could not return the hospitality, as one was a four-mule mission and the other a five-mule

mission, and they had about four spoons and forks amongst them. The people of Adowa did not seem greatly taken with the outward pomp and show, but when the Consuls were in full uniform they eclipsed the members of ours; and not the Admiral in full uniform, with all his blaze of medals, or Mason Bey in his brass-bound coat, could even come up to the Greek Consul. The man who, perhaps, was most looked at was Kennedy's soldier-servant, in the 42nd Highland uniform, and he also came in for some remarks, owing to his red coat, a colour that reminded the Abyssinians doubtless of 1868.

The French Consul tried to see the King first, and went on to meet him on his road to Adowa, but was told to go back. The Greek Consul also went on a day's march, and was also ordered to return, as the King would meet no one till he had seen the Admiral—another sure sign, as people will say, that he is a savage, but which, we all thought, was very good of him. He certainly had kept the mission waiting a very long time; but he could just as well have said he would meet the Admiral further up country. He had long been kept waiting by England for answers to his letters, and this was the first mission that had visited him since the war in 1868.

We all went up the hill to the King's house to see him arrive, and a very curious sight it was, and one to be remembered for life. As a show of barbaric splendour it could not be equalled—unlike anything I have seen in the East. The King was accompanied by all the chief notables of the country who could be spared from the different governments, and his escort was as gorgeous as foreign brocaded silks and satins could make them. The King's umbrella and that of the Chief Priest or Itchage were most gorgeous and wonder-

ful fabrications—made in Paris—purple silk covered with handwork flowers and gold sticks.

The shields and swords would have done the hearts of arm-collectors good and made them envious to possess them. The road by which the King came lay along the ridge of hills to the south of our camp, and as soon as he was in sight the Admiral ordered up the two little guns, brought up as a present, to fire a salute on his entering his house. It was not easy to keep the crowd back, and I thought for certain some one would get blown to pieces or some accident would take place. However, the salute went off all right. On account of the crowd we had but a short glimpse of the King, and he made a salaam in return to our bows. From all accounts that had been published of him I expected to see an ogre at least, but was agreeably surprised to see a very ordinary-looking man dressed very plainly and looking very quiet and composed, who did not order anyone to be killed for our benefit, although I saw a lot of people get stick from the Abyssinian A Division of Police because they did not keep the road clear, and insisted in crowding round the door.

After seeing the King into his house, some of us went for a stroll to see the troops, and they were just the common sort of Abyssinian fighting-men, lithe and active; no unnecessary garments about them; Remington rifle and cartridge belt, and shield or target, with the ordinary Abyssinian curved sword. All of them wore the natural red and white shamma or kaurie. The mounted men were on useful, hardy little nags, and it was most amusing to see them spread out over the hills following the cattle tracks to their places of encampment, and to notice how soon they all disappeared and stowed themselves away.

The sight that interested me most was the arrival of Ras Michael, the King's adopted son, with his Galla troops, at least 25,000 strong. The Ras himself is a nice-looking man, and made Villiers and I a most polite bow as he passed. We were the first Englishmen he had ever seen. We got a splendid view of the troops from a good spot on a rock about eight feet above the road, and chose our place so as to see the troops fairly extended before they got to the narrow part of the ridge close to the King's quarters. A cavalry escort came first, lancers, cavalry with sword and gun, and mounted infantry with their cartridges slung in the native bandoliers. All the mounted men were armed with the sword. The lancers, besides a long lance with a short and very sharp blade, also used straight-cutting swords. Then came Ras Michael and some of his chief officers, and then a great many troops of cavalymen armed with all sorts of weapons, and many with guns, from the old flint-lock cap-guns to breech-loaders. The different troops could be distinguished by the different coloured sheep-skin coats they wore—black, brown, white, and party-coloured, white being the groundwork—all the different colours being together. They were a ragged and curious crowd, and not nearly such smart-looking men as the King's cavalry, although they looked a hardy and active lot. I should say they would be utterly useless against disciplined troops, but could go where no English cavalry could; and their great utility would be as scouts pursuing a defeated enemy and harassing lines of communication, as the horses, or, I might call them, ponies, are capable of covering very long distances. The infantry came on in an enormous phalanx in very fair formation, and round the phalanx were more mounted men; they also were in formation according to the colour of the sheep-skins. Their arms were every-



thing and anything in the shape of sword, spear, shield, and musket. What struck me at once, against an enemy only armed with sword, and spear and shield,\* what a grand form of attack or defence the phalanx is, and what a little chance the dervishes would have against it, as the first two or three rows are armed with guns and the spearmen are behind them. The spearmen have a bundle of lances, some three or four, others six or seven, and before we left Adowa some of us had a chance of seeing what good shots they were with them and what a distance they could throw the spear. Another thing struck me: if a phalanx got beaten and choked up in a narrow valley or gorge, what a massacre would take place, as the centre people would hardly be able to move. After the infantry had gone past they were followed by a few more cavalry, and then by the camp-followers, with pots and pans and cooking utensils, some laden on mules, others on the backs of the young ladies and children. Nearly all the camp-followers are young women, and they do the hospital work in time of war and attend to the wounded, etc. They are capable of fighting at times, and also do the polishing-off work for the wounded enemy when fighting against the Moslem.

The music and the band were worthy of notice. The former was discordant in the extreme, as the instruments used by the band consisted of long straight trumpets and pipes, some with notes like the flute, others plain; cymbals and drums of all sizes, from the very big kettledrum, others not much larger than a jam tin. The trumpets put me in mind of those as seen in pictures representing the instruments used in the eleventh and twelfth century. The cymbals were ordinary brass ones; what the skins of the large ones were made of I don't know, those of the smaller were of

\* Like the dervishes.

monkey skin. The big drums round the sides were ornamented with trophies of war of a kind entirely out of place, and might have been taken off for this occasion. The kettledrums were carried English-fashion, one on each side of a mule or horse; and some of the big kettledrums had little ones fastened alongside of them. The soldiers were all very civil, though I did not understand their remarks. My interpreter, however, said that "they were not talking bad, only discussing us," just as we were them. We retired to our camp very much delighted with the novel sight, which was truly unique, and could be seen in no other country.

Next morning we all had to go in full dress and pay our respects to the King, Speedy, Villiers, and myself being the only ones not in uniform. The King received the Admiral in his reception-house, a very poor sort of a building, and, like nearly all Abyssinian erections, circular, with the public entrance towards the large enclosure. The reception-room was approached through a porch, which formed a sort of waiting-room, and the interior of the room was screened off with a wooden screen. The King received the Admiral sitting, and his mouth and lower part of his face was covered up with his shamma. The Admiral, in a few appropriate and very manly words, told the King the object of his mission, and presented him with the Queen's letter, which was a most gorgeous document, however, in very good taste, and the envelope was of velvet, worked with gold thread. Mason presented the Khedive's letter, and Speedy one from Lord Napier of Magdala. The King's presents were then brought in and some of them shown, and were received with evident delight, the rifles and guns being specially admired. The King had by this time uncovered the lower part of his face, and conversation was kept up between him and the

Admiral. Ras Aloula, the Itchage or Chief Priest, and two or three servants (one had a fly whisk and another a fan) were the only ones present besides the Admiral and his mission. The King is by no means an ugly man; his apparent age is 42 to 45. He wears his hair in the ordinary Abyssinian fashion, plaited and drawn together behind at the nape of the neck. The only ornament he wore on his head was a very handsome gold pin, made for use as well as ornament. His clothes were the same as any other Abyssinian chief, but of better stuff than ordinarily worn. They looked very clean and nice. In height I should say he was about 5ft. 9in., and of an active and muscular figure; hands and feet of ordinary size; face regular, except the chin, which is slightly receding; cheek bones a little high; face oval, neither thin nor fat, and neither strikes one as the face of a great genius or as that of a cruel and sensuous man. The seat on which he was sitting was made of a Bombay blackwood bedstead, covered with black cloth, which nearly reached to the ground, ornamented with silver tassels and ornaments. The cushions which propped up His Majesty were also of black cloth, with edging of silver work and silver tassels. The room was circular, and had no other furniture worth speaking about. The floor was covered with fresh-cut rushes. The walls were of the ordinary ochre yellow, and the roof black and smoke-stained.

After the presents were brought in the Admiral retired, and we all wended our way back to camp and breakfast. We met the French Consul going to his interview. The Greek Consul is always hanging about the King's house. It was with some difficulty that we got through the crowd to our mules, and the King's head man of the courtyard gave orders that next time the Admiral was to ride up to

the King's inner door before he got off, a privilege no one else enjoys. After breakfast I was sent for by the Admiral, and told that Ras Aloula had asked for me to explain the King's presents, and how to put up the King's tent; so I had to go up the hill again, and did not get back till after lunch. I was allowed to pass through the private way, and was shown over the King's stables. He had four very fine riding horses, much larger than the ordinary horse of the country. There were two splendid animals, a bay and a chestnut, both over sixteen hands, and looked up to any amount of hard work. From the stables I went to the King's inner house, which was very much like the house the Admiral was received in, only about twice the size, and from two sides there were projecting rooms.

I saw the interpreter busy at work translating the Queen's and Lord Napier's letters, and after putting all the guns together and revolvers and explaining them to King John's private servant and to a lot of admiring followers, we set to work to get the tent up. It was a most gorgeous affair of crimson silk outside, and lined with crimson silk and orange satin stripes. The single pole, as it was a bell tent, was made of highly polished wood, the joint being silver-plated. The fringe round the edge was also of silk, and the ropes to hold the tent were of fine scarlet cotton, and the tent was surmounted by a gold fleur-de-Lys. It was a very smart turnout, and would last several fine days, but what with Abyssinian rain and dirt its beauty will not be retained long. After finishing the tent I had a long talk to Ras Aloula, who was kind enough to send two of his officers with me through the crowd on my way back to camp.

The interviews the Admiral had with the King were not of much interest, but on all occasions he was received very

well. The scribes of the mission and others were now hard at work with Ledg Meshesha and Ledg Mertcha, and the King's private secretary, making the treaty. Before it was ready for signature we lost two more of our mission, viz., Flag-Lieutenant Graham and Villiers, who had left for Massowah with dispatches; this, with the loss of Crowe, Paris, and Fitzgerald before, reduces our party greatly; at the same time it has taken a good lot of work off the transport, and reduced the cook's department and the shooting.

The camp was regularly visited by the King's and the Galla soldiers, and great bargains were made—two or three empty bottles for a sword and spear, curios of all sorts purchased for nothing. One of the Somauli interpreters bought a horse for five empty bottles—three porter bottles and two Rose's lime-juice cordial, the latter being long white ones with "fantasias" on them. My servant bought a sword, spear, knives, and shield for three empty bottles and an old red cotton handkerchief; and during my stay at Adowa I used to pay for my fresh milk in this way—two bottles of fresh morning and evening, and at the end of the week the two bottles used to become the young lady's property. She would try and make a week five days, and as bottles were not scarce in our camp I did not mind. The King's secretary was also very fond of the interior of the bottle, and as he used to get refreshment from the Admiral when visiting him, then from Mason Bey, and then from Captain Speedy, he was always most friendly after his visits; on one occasion he went round to all the tents in camp with old Ledg Mertcha, and both of them had not steady seats when they went home.

The translations and the making of the treaty took a good many sittings, real sittings on the ground of one of

the huts, and we were not sorry when it was time to get it sealed. The ceremony was an imposing one, and the King seemed delighted when it was finished. The King's son, Ras Areya Selasie, Ras Michael, the King's adopted son, and Ras Aloula were present on the occasion. It took place at the King's new encampment half way between Adowa and Adi-Aboona, after his return from praying at Axum. We were all received in a large marquee tent, the King's throne being placed at one end. His chiefs sat on his left hand, Admiral Hewett on his right. After sealing, the King began talking and laughing with the Admiral, and we soon left and rode home with an invitation to come the next day to say good-bye, the Admiral and his suite to receive presents from the King.

Next day we all went up to the same encampment, and after paying our respects we left the King's presence, and were taken to another tent, where outside we found the Greek and French Consuls waiting, and dressed in their uniform. The Admiral had his robes put on him first, which consisted of a beautiful cape made of lion's mane, trimmed round the edges with silk and silver beads, and fastened round the neck with a silver brooch. A beautiful shield heavily embossed with silver and silver-gilt work, and a fine carved sword, the scabbard richly ornamented with filigree work, a silver-gilt armlet for the sword-hand, and the Order of Solomon, a gold double triangular medal with inscription and six precious stones.

Besides the clothes, which consisted of a shamma of beautiful soft cotton and a silk stripe, a sort of night-shirt-shaped garment of satin and of gorgeous colours, the Admiral had given him a silver-mounted spear, a very good horse with saddle and bridle complete, the head-stall being richly

mounted with silver, and a mule with saddle and bridle complete. Mason Bey was also beautifully fitted out, but not so prettily as the Admiral. Speedy, also, had another pretty dress given him, with a black leopard skin cape. Captain Rolfe, the Admiral's late Flag-Commander, Smith the Secretary, Dr. Gimlette, and myself, were the only others that got decorated, and we had night-shirts of silk and satin and shammas given us, and a very good mule with saddle and bridle each. I wanted to get out of taking mine, but Ras Aloula said it would make the King angry if I refused. I had already received on a former occasion the silver-gilt armlet, silver embossed shield, the silver-mounted spear, a sword, shamma, and a mule, and it was receiving a much lower grade in the eyes of the Abyssinians than I had hitherto got. Besides, the parson and Captain Kennedy had been left out without receiving anything, and Graham, who had already been twice up to see Ras Aloula about arranging the treaty meeting, had got nothing. So on arrival at camp I told the Admiral I should turn my presents over to Graham, and I had only accepted them in order not to offend the King.

When we had all completed our toilettes we went back to the King, who seemed quite pleased to see us all dressed out, and after another conversation, in which the King hoped that his friendship to the English would always last, and wishing us every luck, we all shook hands, and bade him good-bye, perhaps for the last time, as it was evident few of us would ever go to his country again. We all went outside, walked down the steep part of the hill which was bad riding, the admired ones of a great audience, who made many remarks on our change from European to native dress, then mounted the animals that had been given us as

presents, and returned to camp. What would Barnum or Sanger have given for the cavalcade! I am sure if the Lord Mayor of London could have seen us he would have immediately wanted us to take part in the next Lord Mayor's Show. A real live English Admiral dressed as the biggest full-grown Abyssinian official! We formed an imposing spectacle. I know I did, as the night-shirt being too small for me, and the stirrups being made to hold the big toe, I could not get my feet in them, and my legs hung down full length; the night-shirt caught my trousers below the knee, and I had a good long bit of sock showing between my boot and them; then the night-shirt behind just came to the mule's tail; my shamma would not keep on properly and nearly fell on the ground, and the laughs all this produced were most hearty. Others of the mission looked nearly as amusing, and to end up the cavalcade William, the Admiral's servant, put on the Admiral's coat, with all his decorations, as carrying the coat and riding at the same time might have hurt it. William was on a very third-class mule, so what with his plain clothes continuations, an Admiral's coat, surmounted by a straw hat, he was not the least amusing of our caricatures.

That afternoon and next morning were occupied in packing up, and at an early hour tents were struck and our neat and orderly camp was a heap of confusion. We were a smaller party than when we arrived, fewer transport animals and less kit; loads were lighter and the Commissariat reduced to the lowest limit. Our last dinner at Adowa was a hurried one, and the majority of the party were glad to get away. I regretted leaving the place, as I enjoyed the climate, the shooting, and the open-air life. I should have



liked to remain behind to have gone into details which had not been considered, and I promised Ras Aloula that I would send two memorandums to help him in the future in inducing the King to accept.

The big tent and its carpets were left as presents to Ras Aloula by the Admiral, in return for his courtesy and kindness to us.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RETURN.

"GOOD-BYE, Adowa, till we meet again, which I hope will be some day!" Then over the Assam ford, with the familiar picture of bathing girls, water girls, and down the river the washing-place, with men and women washing clothes—a merry, jovial lot, with never a bad word from one of them—then up the bank on the Adi-Aboona side.

"Come along, Mahomed; what's the matter?"

The one eye looks sad, the blind eye is also looking rather moist.

"I have left my wife behind," he says.

"What! Mahomed, you have got a wife already here?"

"Yes;" and with a shake of his head he says, "Shoho boy not give chance every day get Abyssinia wife; me very poor. She say she come to Massowah with me."

Mahomed casts longing looks behind, but he does not see his lady love. Just near the Itchage's house I meet Ras Aloula, and immediately dismount; so does Mahomed, who is riding the mule given me by the King. I go and shake hands with the Ras and get the iron grip of his hand in return. We talk for a few minutes; he asks me to come and

see him, or send my friends to him whenever I like, and whatever I want I have only to ask for, as he never will forget my kindness to him and to his country. Another grip of the hand and I say "Good-bye" to the most perfect native I ever came across—a gentleman, a soldier, and a man in every sense of the word; a man, I believe, who would not lie. At least he is a man of his word. I feel this time a lump in my throat when leaving him, as I believed his word, and his words of six years ago. He then said he would never make peace, nor would his master, until the English had signed peace on their behalf, and the thing had become an accomplished fact and two European Consuls had been present at the signing of it.

A smart canter, to try the pace of the new mule, soon brought me to the green fields round the brooks of Adi-Aboona. The fields that had grain growing in them when we arrived at the end of our up-country journey were now being ploughed up and the crops harvested, other crops were growing in the fields nearer the brooks, and the water meadows were just as green and fresh as ever. Lots of men were ploughing with the primitive old plough that has been in fashion for centuries; it just scratches up the ground for a depth of three or four inches, but seems to be sufficient to break the soil and grow decent crops. The ploughs are generally drawn by a pair of oxen, and the instrument is of the roughest description, consisting of a long curved bit of hard wood, with an iron share of small size attached to the outer curve, and a big stone placed on the inner curve immediately above the ironshare—heavy, cumbersome, primitive, and cheap, and likely still to be used for centuries to come unless the country is opened up. Along the road to Darotchlai the peasants were hard at work, and the day

being cloudy and rain threatening (the rains being due), when the seed has to be got in the ground as soon as possible after it commences falling. The tef is generally the first grain got in and the first to be gathered, and takes about three months to come to maturity; it is a very small grain, and grows more like grass than corn; the seed is very small, but it is astonishing what good flour it makes. There are two sorts of tef that I have seen—the white and the brown. At the Darotchlai Pass we come across five runaway young women from Adowa, who had left their homes to try and get to Massowah with the followers of the mission. I spoke to Mahomed, and told him to tell them to go back, which he would not do, as he said he should like to marry one of them, and as it was no affair of mine they followed us up, keeping along at a good six miles an hour.

The scenery going down the pass was grand. Two storms were going on, one in the Halai range, the other over the Wolkeit country, and the lights and shades from the clouds were lovely. It promised ill for the morrow, as we had to ford the Mareb, and sometimes after rains it takes days before the caravans can pass. I had my orders to push on as far as I could, so I went past our old camping ground, with its scorpions, and pushed on to Lala and its pretty glades and forest trees. There we arrived at noon, having done a very big morning's march, the greater part of it downhill. I amused myself by shooting francolin till some of the tents came up, and soon got eight birds. It was very pretty shooting ground—large glades of fresh green grass and clumps of bushes and big trees, and the Lala river running along its stony bed, and on the trees on one little island there was a perfect heronry of at least 50 nests, and

among the herons were one or two cranes and some egrets. Three black duck I also put up, but could not get a shot at them.

On getting back to camp I found some of those mules loaded with tents had arrived, and by the time we had pitched a couple of them a message came from the Admiral saying that he could not go further than Darotchlar, with an order to send his things back, while everthing that was not wanted could remain at Lala. I remained behind in charge and sent back the francolin to the Admiral. Then, finding we had only a few biscuits and a tin of preserved beef for two hungry sailors and a marine, and only one saucepan to do the cooking. in, I set out again to see if I could get some more francolin. I got three birds and a hare, and then it came on to rain and set in for a wet afternoon, making prospects of crossing the Mareb next morning anything but rosy. The sailors, marine, and I made a joint mess, and all turned into the same tent. I had no change of clothes with me and no bedding, so dried my coat over a camp fire and then sat down to supper with a good appetite, having had nothing to eat since the morning, before I started from Adowa. The birds, hare, beef, and biscuits soon disappeared, and some hot cocoa and a lot of navy rum soon made us all right, and the rain going off we had a fine but rather cold night. I was awake before daylight and getting things together, and soon after sunrise the small camp was all broken up and mules loaded and waiting for the Admiral, who I expected would be angry at my pushing on so far the first day. He was not, however, and I told him the place where I thought next camp should be, viz., at the wells on the Guidi-Guidi, between our old camp and the battle-field of Gundet, where the Egyptians made their

final stand. I knew the country had all my landmarks, and told the Admiral I would do some shooting on the way, so followed the Lala stream, which ran in some parts at least five miles from the ordinary road. The only obstacles in the way were the mimosa bushes and scrub, and during the dry season there is no doubt that the bee-line I made for the Mareb is the better route of the two ; the road made use of is the one used both in dry and wet seasons. I was very unfortunate. I came across a sounder of pigs, and only had my shot-gun, and did not like to fire at the old boar, as he looked wicked, and I was rather pleased than otherwise that, after looking at me for about half a minute at forty yards off, he turned and made off. I was quite ready to have it out with him if he had charged, and followed out the old Ceylon mode of waiting till the boar is within ten yards and then giving both barrels in the chest. A man with nerve can always secure a pig with perfect safety by this plan, and I should not have minded having a try at the Abyssinian pig. I saw one or two gazelle, but could not get near them, and my bag consisted of one hare and several guinea-fowl, with which the plain was swarming. I then went on as hard as I could, as it had commenced to rain, and just before getting to the Mareb Valley caught up the last of the mules. I waited at the river till I saw everything over, and while waiting the river had risen at least three inches, and there was full three feet nine inches at the ford, and was fully 80 yards across ; the water a dark chocolate colour from the rains, while sticks and rubbish came rolling and tumbling over in the eddies. A little more rain and the ford would not have been easy for laden animals to cross. The afternoon's rain that we had later on would have made it impassable, so we were lucky to have got over the only bad part of the road

to the coast as we did. I pushed on after having seen everything safe, and in two hours had caught up the leading mules and arrived in camping-ground at about two o'clock, very hungry, and longing for the mules with the food.

I got four tents up, too, and then set to work to get the picketing lines down, made a raid on the provision mules, had a good meal, and started for a long afternoon's shoot before the mission had arrived in camp. It did nothing but rain nearly the whole time. I made in the direction of the cliffs, on which table-rock is set, and back across the whole centre position of the Egyptians at Gundet battle-field, and got a few guinea-fowl and francolin, missed a hare or two, and a gazelle, an easy shot with a rifle, but too far off for buckshot. I saw fresh leopard's marks, which could not have been five minutes old, the animal evidently having been disturbed by my shot at the gazelle. I got back to camp, tired out and wet through, at seven o'clock, just as it was dark. We went next morning to take another look at the battle-field, this time along the line of retreat from the left of the position of the Egyptians. It was the same old story, a gradual line of diminishing skeletons. We then had the Adi-quala pass to mount, and did it easily, being more lightly loaded. This was our last serious climb, it being now all down hill to Massowah. I looked everywhere on the pass for the remains of the Admiral's horse which was destroyed on our way to Adowa, but could not find a single bone, not even one of the shoes; the hyænas had evidently polished off everything, and I suppose the iron shoes had been taken by the natives. The Admiral wanted a shoe as a remembrance of his mount at El Teb.

We did not remain at Adi-quala, nor did we go and see our irascible friend who had got himself into trouble by stop-

ping Crowe, Paris, and Fitzgerald on their way to the coast for twenty-four hours. We found the plateau nearly all broken up ready for sowing, and as we had a smart shower when crossing it, it would not be long before it changed its sombre brown colour for the lovely fresh green of growing crops. The road after leaving the plateau is down hill; then there is another hill and then a small rise on to a lower plateau, which is, if possible, more encumbered with stones than the higher one. It is still cultivated, and a hard job it seemed to be to plough it. Here there had evidently been more rain, as the grass and wild flowers were coming up, and the banks and glades were covered with magnificent lilies. There was a pure white one, trumpet-shaped, with a very sweet smell; another that flowered in clusters, the flower being star-shaped, white, with a mauve-shaded stripe down the centre of each petal; and a common yellow lily. In places they were in hundreds; the former two I have not seen in England, and are worth cultivating.

We encamped this time at a new place, which we passed to our left on coming up, named Eyamo, a pretty spot, but exposed, and very cold. The village and the church were sheltered by a small cliff and a few trees. We had, with our big party, to camp out in the open downs. The afternoon was wet, and there was some lightning with terrific thunder—flash and thunder simultaneous. Eyamo is a great grazing and corn-growing district; the land is high, and the chain of ponds and springs lead down to the Mareb river through the Eyamo valley, which offers excellent pasturage the whole year round. The country is divided by ridges of stony ground, covered with bush and scrub timber; and all the open spaces, which vary from 200 to 2,000 acres, are cultivated. Many of the larger spaces have one or two good



ponds of water in them, which are useful both for man and beast, and save a lot of trouble in crop time. The natives generally leave their villages and come and camp round these ponds. Game abounds, and while out shooting, both at noon and in the evening, I saw a great many gazelle. I wounded one very badly, and should have got him if daylight had not given out. Guinea-fowl, francolin, grouse, hares, four or five sorts of gazelle, geese, and ducks abound, and I should think snipe in the season.

About five or six miles to the westward a range of hills commences, on which, the natives say, are many pig and kudoo and sometimes elephants, and in the dry season, in the plains, lions often come up after the cattle. I had a wet and miserable night in my bell tent, and was not sorry to get away the first thing in the morning for a good long march to Teremnie. We passed on this day's march Ona-hiala and Koodofelasie, or Godofelasie, two camping-grounds on our way up, and after six hours' hard travelling I got first into Teremnie and saw the head man, who did not expect us for two days. He was very kind, and asked me what the Admiral required. I said nothing but to buy grain, at which he was pleased, and went off to get supplies. I, with a few natives, got firewood together, lighted a fire for the cook, built him a cooking place, marked out camp and cleared spaces for the Admiral's tent, and seeing no one in sight except a few natives with some of our pack mules, went out for a shoot. Teremnie is a perfect guinea-fowls' paradise; but it was too late and too early for them to be out in the scrub or in the open. I got seven in eight shots, and returned to camp, having been away an hour. I have seen them in thousands here, and the rocks and thick trees, which stretch for about two miles with a varying breadth of from one to three hundred yards, make

it a great preserve. The cover, as it might be called, is entirely surrounded by cultivated land. What a grand *battue* one might have by cutting drives across, with a well-organized lot of beaters and dogs!

Teremnie must be a pretty place in crop-time. It is the last cultivated ground between it and Addetchlai on that road, with the exception of the small district at Saul, and the same on the longer road to Asmara plain, with the exception of the few farms round Checut. The road from Teremnie *via* Checut to Asmara town is the shorter of the two, as the other leads *via* Addetchlai, which makes it a detour. There is only a small cattle path from Addetchlai to Checut, which is totally unfit for laden animals. Many of the mules did not get into camp till 4 p.m., and then were very done up. So it was decided, as next day was Sunday, to make a short march, so as to divide the rather long march into Asmara. So we got away on a nice cool morning with an overclouded sky, and over wild moorland interspersed with bog pools, and a few poor patches of cultivated land, which was in fallow. The country was quite level for about nine miles, but of a very wild description, and not a tree was visible for miles. It looked a lovely snipe and duck country, the ditches and water-courses being lined with sedge and rushes. I saw nothing in the shape of game except three geese, one of which I got after a long stalk. The geese stop the whole year round; not so the duck and snipe. The best time for shooting in Abyssinia is from September till March, but of course if time is no object and money likewise, big game can always be followed in its migration.

At the end of the Teremnie plain is a line of hills running east and west. In the west they run from Saul, gradually getting of less elevation towards the east, where they end

in undulating forest-clad hills at the Mareb Valley. Towards one of the smaller hills our road runs, and on getting up it we find a small cultivated area with a rather pretty little hamlet and church; passing some two or three big sycamore trees situated on the greenest of lawns, on which and under the trees the cattle of the hamlet are feeding.

Presently we come to some rocks that shut out a further view ahead, and, on winding through these, we all of a sudden come on a deep valley, or more properly speaking, a gorge. To the east, about seven or eight miles off, we see the mountains near Saul, from which spring the Mareb's sources, which we passed between Addetchlai and Saul on our way up country. The view is very picturesque, but not nearly so fine as from the sources, as it is to a greater extent limited, and the running water cannot be seen. On going down the hill to the bed of the Mareb there is a very pretty little bit of landscape, made up of green lawn just above the river's bed, with park-like trees and sycamore studded about, the road up the other cliff winding through scrub and candelabra euphorbia. The Mareb here is an insignificant stream, trickling along its bed, and flood-mark does not seem to be more than eight to ten feet high on the banks, and at the road where we crossed the stream must always be fordable.

The road from the Mareb gorge to Checut is very uninteresting; there is little or no cultivation, with scrub and hills on each side. It is good francolin ground, and I am told in the rains elephants often pass to and fro, going from the Mareb to the Halai and Shoho countries. Formerly Koodoo and other antelope were common, but since Addetchlai has been Ras Aloula's headquarters the game

has been greatly harried by his soldiers. We soon came to Checut, about three miles from the Mareb. The village is curious, built on the top of a ridge of hills, with a zareba running parallel to the ridge. I counted about eighty houses or separate families in the place, and what ground they had seemed in good cultivation. They have an unlimited supply of good water, as in the little valley before the town there is that curious series of springs and pools so common in all the highlands of Abyssinia, giving good water and a certain amount of green food all the year round. With a little trouble irrigation could be carried out, and if left alone the Hamasen would soon revert into a garden, and as an agricultural country I don't think it could well be beaten. I saw here one field of tef just springing up, and I should very much like to experiment with it in England or Ireland. It is the first grain that comes to maturity; it wants little sun, and will stand lots of rain, and seems not to mind drought. It looks to me more like a grass than anything else. We got halted by nine o'clock, and by eleven our camp was pitched, our mules picketed and fed. We then had breakfast, a lazy Sabbath before us, with nothing of a march the next day worth naming.

I took a stroll round, and went up to explore Checut. I met the old priest, and had a talk with him. At the head man's house we had some fair tedj, which was brought in a very nice cow-horn set in silver, and was handed me by the head man's daughter, a very pretty girl, and cleanly clad. She said she had been to Sanheit, where doubtless she had learnt her cleanliness. I then went back to lunch, and down to a big clump of trees, round which were several more springs, and had a smoke and a snooze. After dinner I went down to old Bru's tent, which was

alongside the mule lines, where there was an enormous camp fire, and the mule drivers were dancing and singing songs, glad enough that they were nearing the coast, and would soon be with their wives and sweethearts again. Old Bru and I had a long talk about what had taken place, and he knowing Abyssinian politics in all their details, and the actors in them, an instructive half hour could always be spent with him. His idea is that from the King to the minor chiefs they are all pleased that peace has been signed, and believe that now there is a chance of their country improving. They want a rest badly, and the levies of soldiers not being called out, a ten years' peace and commercial intercourse with European merchants would be the making of the country.

The Admiral came down just before the dancing was over and had a talk, and we all turned into bed rather late. An early start next morning over a shocking bad stony and bushy road, part of the way being along the side of the hills, hardly twenty yards of it even, and the low, growing wild olive trees by which most of the road was shaded made it hard for the transport animals to get along, their loads being knocked off and unplaced by the overhanging branches. Whatever may be the difference in distance from Teremnie to Asmara in favour of Checut route is entirely wiped off by the badness of the road at present. The road *viâ* Saul and Addetchlai is a good wheel road the whole way. After getting over the last ridge in the forest through which we are marching, a view of the Asmara plain is obtained, and the hills are visible about nine miles off.

This side of the Asmara plain is supposed to be the most fertile, and from the verge of the forest to Asmara it looks a dead level; on the left of the road can be seen the property

belonging to the late General Kirkham. The house is on a hill, and round it are the houses of his villagers, making a picturesque little scene. The ground round is very easy of cultivation, there being plenty of water, and the soil rich, and, in the hands of a farmer, might be made a place where, if money could not be made, starvation would be impossible, while clothing could be had for the interchange of surplus grain. These little hills, covered with a few fine trees, round which the houses are built, have a quiet, homely look, and I daresay there are many people who would like to emigrate from the old country to a good climate with fair sport, where a maximum amount of the food of the world can be secured for a minimum of labour, where the inhabitants are Christians of sorts, and will leave a stranger alone provided the stranger leaves them alone. The plain is cut up by small water-courses, and the soil is very deep and black, and at the present moment free from weeds, having been broken up to receive the grain as soon as the rains commence. I ride on first, and get into Asmara about half-past nine, after a three and a half hours' ride, and immediately go up to old Berhano's house to get the news. He had arrived the evening before from Massowah, and was full of news from all parts of the Soudan.

The mail that was at Berhano's house I sent on to the Admiral, as I knew he wanted his telegrams, and afterwards sat down to have a talk with my host. What changes take place, and how little the English authorities know or care about the Soudan! In April, when we left for this expedition, the country was on its way fairly to pacification; now a little over two months and what a change! The blood-letting at Tamaai and El Teb seems to have done no good,

and the country is in a worse state than ever. They manage these things better in Abyssinia.

On seeing the Admiral I went down to meet him and he seemed very pleased, and I was soon told by him that he had got his promotion, at which we were all delighted. Unfortunately for some of us he has to go straight to Aden, and not return to Suakim. We also received the news of the result of the Derby; certainly this information has never reached Asmara by the 9th of June before. The Admiral and I divide first and second prizes, I having drawn Harvester. We had a very good dinner, and the Admiral stood us champagne all round on account of his good news. It was a very merry time this, our last night in the Abyssinian highlands, and certain it is our party will never meet again under the same circumstances. After dinner we decided to sleep at Ginda next evening; then the Admiral was to push on from Ginda to Sahaati, where he was to sleep, and come in the evening after next morning to Massowah as early as possible, I to take the letters in from Ginda as quickly as possible.

We started early from Asmara next morning, and I was told to make the pace and pick out camp, so I had nothing to look after all day except to pick up things for the pot. Unfortunately all day there were Abyssinians going forward and backward on their way to Massowah, so the road was too much disturbed. The chicken pedlar, the rich merchant, the medium merchant, and the poor merchant were all represented. Three months ago there was nothing of this, and the road was inhabited alone by game. As far as I am concerned the change is for the better. We came across many of the Shohos, Hamasen, and Beni Amer shep-

herds to-day, with their herds of cows and bullocks. The migration to the mountains is now taking place from the plains and lower ranges of hills, as the grass is now all burnt up and there is scarcely any food left. The mountain rains are due, and in a few days no doubt everything will be green. There is little food for the cattle now anywhere, and June is generally starvation month for them, not only in the highlands, but in the lowlands and throughout the Soudan. The Mahenzie Pass was soon got over. Coming down I dismounted and walked, as in some places it fatigues the animal to make him jump down the ledges, and it is a great deal more comfortable on foot than on mule back in these difficult passes.

I arrived at Ginda about noon, having had six hours hard going from Asmara, the road being downhill the whole way except for about a mile and a half. We camped near the wells and in the shadow of three sycamore trees, at a place where I have spent many happy days. In olden times Ginda used to be a splendid shooting place, and I daresay may become so again. From under one of these trees I killed in 1878 a wild pig, which I had been watching in the open for a long time. Guinea-fowl came down regularly every evening to drink at the wells. They don't mind the cattle and the native women and children, but as soon as they see a European or a native with a gun they are off at once. Talk about crows and other birds knowing a gun, they cannot be compared to guinea-fowl, who are the hardest birds to get at and the most knowing of all game after they have once been shot at. Talk about an old cock pheasant or a covey of red-legs, an old cock guinea-fowl has more dodges in him and is more artful in every way!

There is a different feeling in the atmosphere to-night, it



being much hotter. Indeed, a tent is not really wanted. We were up early and under weigh shortly after daylight. Ginda being so shut in by high mountains we could not see what the day was going to be like, or whether the first part of the morning would be shady. I was away again among the first, and made my own bee line across the plateau to the shortest cut into Sabagumba, where our Egyptian guard was waiting for us. I got to the pass before the Admiral and his party, and went down it with Mason's private secretary. Every step down the weather seemed to get hotter and hotter and the air heavier to breathe. At the bottom of the pass I watered my mule in the little pool under the tamarind trees, then mounted and rode on to Sabagumba camping ground, where I found a company of Bashi Bazouks and old Abdulla Ghoul Bey, the head merchant of Massowah, waiting for the Admiral. I waited too for his last instructions before starting for Massowah, where I expected to be that evening before sunset, and started away with Mahomed the one-eyed at eight o'clock for Sahaati.

The morning was a roaster—not a cloud nor a breath of wind anywhere. I only halted on the road once—to get some guinea-fowl and francolin. I came up to two lots of pigs on Ailet plain, one of five and one of three, a lot of gazelle, and one bustard. We saw Ailet about six miles to our left, and as it was getting hot I made Mahomed come on as quickly as possible. About half-way I found Mahomed had brought no water with him in his bottle, and I had only my small one with me. I was asked for a drink, which I refused till we got the other side of the plain, as the heat was becoming intenser. On arrival at the small pass I made Mahomed go to the top of it before he got a drink, and I took a mouthful myself. He wanted a rest. I said, "No ;

you must come on or I will leave you." He nearly cried, and swore that Debbub and his robbers were quite close and that he would be killed. I brought him on till we got to the top of the hill, from where Sahaati Hill is visible about six miles off, and then told him, as he would not come on, I should leave him. He told me he would die and that he was ill, which I could see he was. I then gave him my water bottle and was starting off when he asked for my gun to protect himself with, as he could not kill anyone far off with a revolver. I said I would send a mule out for him with some Bashi Bazouks, and as I left I saw him crawl in under a mimosa tree.

I arrived at Sahaati at noon with my head all of a buzz from the heat, my mule wet through and done up, and immediately sent out two Bashi Bazouks, a mule, and some water for Mahomed. On my way after leaving Mahomed I saw two full-armed Shohos on camels on a neighbouring hill, and as I was going so quickly they remained watching me. I did not know who they were.

On going to the huts I was delighted to find that Graham, Paris, and the Admiral's son were there, and that they were doing siesta. I turned them out sharp and told them I was hungry and thirsty. Graham said, "I will bring you a peg," and what was my delight when I found that it was an iced peg. What with the new rest huts at Sahaati, of a greatly improved pattern (really works of art and very comfortable), iced pegs, and a cold luncheon from the flagship, it only wanted Spiers and Pond to open a refreshment bar to provide the same sort of food to make the half-way house between Egypt and Abyssinia quite a civilized place.

If what I have advocated before, and what I wanted General Gordon to do, viz., to place proper rest houses

along the roads, had been done, half the trouble of desert travelling would end. It is absurd saying they would not pay, as the only expense is organizing. There would be a certain amount of patrolling to be done in any case, for there are always Government officials going backwards and forwards. The rest-house keeper for keeping the place clean and in repair would have ample pickings in the way of presents and the sale of milk, chickens, and other things wanted by travellers and the merchants frequenting the roads. A leaf might be taken out of the books of other countries that have been pioneered, and when roads are made comparatively easy, that is to say, so that the traveller knows that once a day he can get shade over his head, or can sleep in a place, with other human beings, and get information as to what is going on before him on his route, the great difficulties of his journey will be done away with. It is hardly conceivable that between Suakim and Berber, a road that carries yearly over £500,000 worth of goods alone, the value of the mat huts *en route* for the accommodation of merchants, at the outside does not come to £50. And no attempt has been made to improve the water supply or sink wells! Certainly Egypt is what the Americans would call a one-horse country, and the people do not deserve to get on. As I have already remarked, in Abyssinia travellers and merchants can go from one village to another, while in the Soudan it is an impossibility.

The officers who had been to Sahaati from the flag-ship had been getting good bags of sand-grouse every day at the water, and had killed from thirty to fifty brace per day, but a good deal of the enjoyment had been discounted by the heat, which was intense. I had a snooze after lunch, and then set out for Massowah at about 4 p.m. My mule was

rather tired, so I got on one of the horses purchased by the Somali interpreter at Adowa from the Galla soldiers for five empty bottles. He took me into Massowah—17 miles—in a little over two hours. I arrived on board the flag-ship at about half-past seven really tired out, and after having had a tub I went to sleep.

I got up before daylight, finding that the Admiral had arrived at about 4 p.m. at the Palace, after a first-rate march in from Sahaati. I visited my quarters in town, put on some clean clothes, and went round to the Palace and found the last of the mules just coming in. I then went on board the flag-ship, to find that the Admiral was leaving in a couple of days. Speedy was to remain behind for some time to watch events. Mason was to leave by first mail-boat, and I had to square up my accounts, finish the inquiry into Debbub's robberies, ship the remaining mules, and then return to Suakim. The next day or two we were all busy with leave-taking. The news that came in from the Soudan was quite bad enough, and we heard that Suakim was again invested by Osman Digna's people; it was not safe at day time three miles from the town, and at night time firing took place between the outposts.

Around Massowah things were far from satisfactory; it was true the road between Sanheit and Massowah was safe, but the Hababs, Beni Amers, and coast people were wavering in their allegiance, and were in communication with the rebels. The road between Sanheit and Cassala was disturbed, communications were irregular, the telegraph line was broken, and had not been repaired. Debbub's robbers were still at large; no effort had been made by the authorities to get the Shoho sheiks to come in or to hand over Debbub's outlaws, who were to be pardoned and drafted

into the local Bashi Bazouks. It was not Speedy's work to see to this; Mason was leaving, and so was I, and there was no one left competent to keep touch with the surrounding tribes or to pacify them or make them act. The only certainty was that there would be no further Abyssinian disturbance; and although King John was willing to act on the offensive against the Mahdists round Cassala and Galābat, he could not be asked to do so until the treaty was ratified, which could not be for some months.

"Good-bye flag-ship, good-bye Admiral and Staff, good-bye Mason!" We were a small party, Speedy and I being the only two Englishmen. He took up his quarters at the Palace, and I at my old quarters at the Armenian merchant's. The heat was something awful after being accustomed to the cold weather in Abyssinia, and I do not think I have ever been in such a trying climate as the islands of Massowah. The heat is just bearable in the middle of the day because as a rule there is a sea breeze, but the nights are so bad, there being neither land nor sea wind, and the damp atmosphere with the dews make sleep impossible. The outskirts of Massowah are better, especially Moncollou four to five miles out; but the ride out and in is tiresome.

The transport animals of our mission which had been shipped to Aden were returned by first steamer. Poor beasts! they had had a nasty ten days at sea, and were looking all the worse for it. One or two had died. The Massowah authorities would not own them, so they went on to Suakim. Suakim would not own them, so they were sent on to Suez, and then Suez would not own them, and some found their way back again to Suakim.

## CHAPTER III.

### ABYSSINIAN PROSPECTS.

I ACCOMPANIED more of the mules back to Suakim with the pack saddles, and got back in the middle of July, to find everything changed, and the place much quieter than when I left it.

I think a small *résumé* of what has occurred, and of what are the prospects of the Abyssinian nation, will not be out of place.

I have already given full details of what had happened and the likely result of Admiral Hewett's mission. The treaty places King John firmly on the throne of Abyssinia and gives him a fair field to develop the resources of his country, and to drive back the wave of Mahdism; if he allows foreign merchants into his country, there is no doubt that it will get on, as he has many industries to improve and products to be worked, which only the foreigner can do, and teach the inhabitants of the country to follow his example. Coffee-planting might be made an industry, and grown nearer the coast than it now is. The collection of india-rubber would give employment to many hands. Improved agriculture would bring better crops. Windmills

might be put up to grind the corn, and Massowah would obtain its supplies of flour from Asmara. There will always be a flow of dollars from Massowah to the hills, and there is a chance of the Hamasen again becoming an important place the moment confidence is restored. Then even Cassala may take its wheat from there instead of getting it *via* Suakim. The flocks would increase, as the great drain of the standing army would cease, and, with more cattle, more land could be cultivated. The mineral wealth of the country might be exploited, and the yield of the gold washings might be increased by better machinery. The gold, so far as can be found out, is from alluvial washings only, and no search has been made for gold-producing quartz and rock. With a monopoly made of ivory, and a royalty on gold washings and india-rubber, the King, with his private property, would have ample money for his own servants and followers, and for a small standing army, without which no King or Sheik in Africa can govern. With the small export and import duty levied at the frontier the country could be governed. The only cause of expense now is the large standing army, which will not be necessary as soon as Mahdism is put down.

To have all this carried out is a matter of comparative ease. Another Consul or Resident to Abyssinia should not be sent until King John asks for one, and then only if he is giving every satisfaction. The place for the Consul is Massowah, where King John can easily refer to if he wants information or advice. Let the merchant open the country; let him go with lawful trade, and behave himself, and he will flourish and be welcomed. There are lots of English adventurers left who are willing to try their luck. They know that they go at their own risk and peril, and that they

have everything to lose by creating disturbances and everything to gain by keeping quiet. They will do the latter. A merchant having once obtained permission from King John to trade with his country is safe against robbery; if his goods are stolen he will get compensation (most likely voluntarily) from the King. Further than this I should not, if my advice were asked, be inclined to go, until the country shows signs of development, which there can be no doubt it will do, and in time absorb a great deal of British and British-Indian trade and produce, which will be bartered. One thing Abyssinia will absorb, and that to a great extent, viz., the rupee. It is now pretty well known, and the inhabitants have found out this, that two rupees and four annas have more and better silver in them than one Maria Thérésa dollar, the only silver they can get hold of. Two rupees four annas are equivalent to a Maria Thérésa dollar, and many Abyssinians cannot afford to break up a dollar, whereas the smaller silver coins make into earrings, hair-pins, buttons, rings, and other little ornaments. We found in Suakim just before the war broke out that the natives were very fond of getting hold of small silver coins for breaking up, and gave the rupee the preference. The Egyptians have got no true silver coinage that can be broken up, and the silver is bad.

As far as King John is concerned he might prove a valuable ally to us in the Soudan, as his soldiers are the only sort that can be secured in this quarter of the globe who can keep touch with the Soudan natives. They don't mind attacking at night; indeed, they prefer to, and with the exception of about three months in the year the plain climate suits them very well. They are good shots, good swordsmen, and active. They can run away as fast as a Soudanie,



or chase as fast as a Soudanie, and with their mode of fighting, namely, running fight with musketry, one man always covering another till he is loaded, makes them very difficult people, even when in the minority, for the Arabs to deal with, and when it comes to hand-to-hand fighting with sword and shield the curved sword of the highlander has the advantage over the straight sword of the lowlander. With a few thousand Abyssinians let loose on the Suakim hills after Tamaai the whole of the Eastern Soudan rebels would soon have been cleared out. The English are not quick enough to follow the Soudanese, and there is not one branch of the service that can do so. Once we got the rebels on the run the Abyssinians would follow them. Cavalry are no good for this country. A dromedary corps would be useful, but it does not exist, and the newly-formed Egyptian camelry on their old baggage animals are useless for following up. The camel wanted is one that will go his sixty miles per day for three days running, and without water. There are plenty of Soudan camels that can do this, and there is hardly a place in the Soudan where for a hundred miles there is no water. Abyssinians in the long run are cheaper than camels, and they don't mind being killed while fighting against their great enemies, and Tommy Atkins will want a lot of practice before he gets accustomed to mountain work on camels, and his life is worth more than that of a thousand fanatical Arabs.

One thing is certain : the first time the Abyssinian picked troops meet the dervishes they will smash them, whether it be at Cassala, Galäbat, or any other place, and I should very much like to see a set-to between them. They are really the natural enemies of the dervishes, and should be encouraged to attack them.

I don't think, now that England has sent a mission up to King John, that he will in future listen to any other foreign Power, and it very much depends on what policy is pursued whether the country will not be opened at once to trade. The King has always proved himself to be a man of his word, and judging from what he has done he can thoroughly be believed in. He was very friendly with Lord Napier; he has never been hostile to England; he always said he would not make peace with Egypt unless England was a witness to it, as he had no faith in the word of an Egyptian. Peace is now a fact, and a brisk trade is being carried on already, with every chance of its increase, and a good understanding will take place between the two countries as long as a Christian Governor is left at Massowah.

I suggested to Ras Aloula that the best thing he could do was to send some of his countrymen of good family to Massowah to study the working of the Egyptian Custom House, which, although not carried out in a strictly honest manner, was based on European ideas, and it was only a matter of arrangement with the Egyptian Government and with the merchants for their duties on goods for Abyssinia to be levied at Massowah, and passes given to free the Border Custom House as well. It would immediately give the King a certain revenue, which, although small at first, would always be an increasing one. The only sound way of getting a revenue would be by taxing the merchants' produce, and not their transport animals. The merchant could afford to pay both an export and import tax, and especially the former, as the produce is not grown by the natives, only gathered, that is to say. There is no difficulty in collecting bees' wax, coffee, gum drugs. The hides are simply taken off the cattle and dried. There is

nothing that they cultivate and sell at Massowah at present. Ivory could be made a monopoly without any great hardship, and the elephant hunters might be taken into Government pay. The ivory now passes through many hands, and a good many of the people who handle it combine slave-hunting with the pursuit of the elephant. This is particularly so in the further Galla countries. With the imports there are many things that would stand a heavy taxation, especially luxuries, as the profits on them are enormous, 200 to 300 per cent. sometimes in the case of silks, carpets, etc.

Time will show whether Admiral Hewett's treaty will be of any use. I am confident that it will bear fruit, and help immensely in the future development of amicable arrangement between the two countries. It is curious how Government try to fix off their business and make use of people. The last person one would have thought would have been sent on such an expedition would be an Admiral in command of a foreign station nearly three months up country in an out-of-the-way place, with little or no communications, and if wanted in a hurry to look after his fleet in case of war he would not be available. Great credit is due to the Admiral for the skill and tact with which he carried out his business, and for his courtesy and kindness both at Suakim, during the campaign, and in Abyssinia. The natives seemed delighted with him, and his sojourn at Adowa will be always looked back upon as a red-letter epoch in their existence. Certainly no mission left such a name behind; it eclipsed everything sent by any other foreign power.

The position at Massowah when I left for Suakim, as far as the south was concerned, was perfect, and there were only a few robbers on the frontier, who had their head-quarters at Assorta, far up in the Shoho country. There was every

chance of keeping the tribes together and making a front against Mahdism, which would tax all the energies of the rebel leaders to make headway against. There was a country from which food supplies enough could be drawn to feed the garrison at Suakim, and where a great number of good transport animals could also be drawn. It only wanted an intelligent European to keep things together and to maintain friendly relations with Abyssinians and get them to act towards the Gallabat side of their country so as to check the Mahdi in the Blue Nile Valley and at Sennaar.

For the use of future travellers I give a *résumé* of the road to Adowa and back. The time taken *en route* is by riding mule, taking the pace at what may be called easy travelling. For transport animals, with a load of from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cwts. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cwts., besides saddles, two hours may be added to each march, and as it is customary to start baggage off first and follow it on and get in front of it during the day's march and wait at the camping ground for it to come in, it is generally only a very short time before the heavy baggage comes up. The more primitive the saddle the slower the animal travels with his load, and there is no doubt with good pack saddles the time *en route* can be shortened.

*From Massowah to Adowa.*—Left Massowah 5 p.m. 7th April, 1884, arrived at Sahaati 9 p.m. (5 hours.); left Sahaati 6.30 a.m. 8th April, arrived at Ailet 8.30 a.m. (2 hours); left Ailet 6 a.m. 10th April, arrived at Sabagumba 8 a.m. (2 hours); left Sabagumba 7 a.m. 11th April, arrived at Ginda 9.30 a.m. ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Ginda 7 a.m. 12th April, arrived at Felogobie 9.30 a.m.; ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Felogobie 6.30 a.m. 13th April, arrived at Asmara 10 a.m. ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Asmara 7 a.m. 15th April, arrived at Addetchlai 9.30 a.m. ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Addetchlai 8 a.m. 16th April, arrived

at Zaul 10 a.m. (2 hours); left Zaul at 8 a.m. 18th April, arrived at Teremnie 10 a.m. (2 hours); left Teremnie 7 a.m. 19th April, arrived at Koodofelasie 9.30 a.m. ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Koodofelasie 6 a.m. 21st April, arrived at Onahiāla 7.30 a.m. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Onahiāla 7 a.m. 22nd April, arrived at Adiquala 9.30 a.m. ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Adiquala 7 a.m. 23rd April, arrived at Gundet 9 a.m. (2 hours); left Gundet 6 a.m. 25th April, arrived at Darotchlai 11 a.m. (5 hours); left Darotchlai 6.30 a.m. 26th April, arrived at Adowa 11.30 a.m. (5 hours). From coast to Adowa  $42\frac{1}{2}$  hours' travelling.

The road has really four bad passes, viz., those of Ginda, Mahenzie, Asmara, and Darotchlai. The pass from Adiquala to Gundet was made easy by the Egyptians when on their march against Adowa and has remained so. All these passes are much easier to get down than go up, and the return trip from Adowa to the coast is much easier.

*From Adowa to Massowah.*—Left Adowa 6.30 a.m. 4th June, 1884, arrived at Lala 11.30 a.m. (5 hours); left Lala 6.30 a.m. 5th June, arrived at Gundet 1 p.m. ( $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Gundet 6.30 a.m. 6th June, arrived at Éyamō 12 noon passing Adiquala ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Éyamō 6 a.m. 7th June, arrived at Teremnie 12 noon, passing Onahiāla and Koodofelasie (6 hours); left Teremnie 5.30 a.m. 8th June, arrived at Checut 9 a.m. ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Checut 6 a.m. 9th June, arrived at Asmara 9.30 a.m. ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours); left Asmara 6 a.m. 10th June, passing Felogobie, arrived at Ginda 12 a.m. (6 hours); left Ginda 6 a.m. 11th June, passing Sabagumba, Ailet (4 hours' rest at Sahaati) arrived at Massowah 8 p.m. (10 hours). From Adowa to Massowah 44 hours.

Looking at these two statements, the time actually taken by the mission up country on the road was less than coming down, as shorter distances were done; the weather was cooler,

and travelling between camping grounds was quicker. When the extra time of transport animals is added it will be seen that, as above, 14 days, at two hours per diem, have to be added to the up country total, viz.,  $42\frac{1}{2}$  hours + 28 hours, or, say, in round numbers, 70 hours, against the down voyage of 44 hours + eight days, or 16 hours = 60 hours. Give four miles an hour, which mules with light loads can do, taking that they go downhill at a half-amble of five miles an hour at least, and uphill at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to three miles an hour, or in round figures distance from coast to Adowa 240 to 260 miles, putting off on the map the geographical position of Adowa from the coast as marked. It puts Adowa a great deal too far inland, but the deviations of route must be taken into consideration, as well as the uphill and downhill work. From the top of Darotchlai Pass, for example, to the top of Adiquala Pass, the distance looks nothing in cannon-shot nearly, but it is seven hours' good hard travelling. The same from the foot of Sabagumba Pass to the top of the Asmara Pass, it looks but a short distance, but it is nine hours' good work to get up to the top of the latter.

I don't know much of military travelling, but as a merchant I should say that the road might be greatly improved, though never made practicable for wheel traffic, but always for mule work, and, with a little expense, for camels as well. The great thing as regards camel transport is the cutting down of the overhanging branches which now allow mules to pass under, but not camels, on account of their height. I never believed till quite lately that camels were so sure-footed, and when shooting after ibex, on the highest hills where a man has the greatest difficulty in climbing, camels are found. The Sanheit-Massowah road, which is a very rough one, they get over all right—not only the hill

camels, but those belonging to the Shukeriyeh tribe, the great transporters of produce from the Taka and Gallabat districts.

Supplies of all sorts can be had at all the camping grounds mentioned, and a traveller with his gun can obtain any amount of small game *en route*, sufficient, indeed, for his table and his followers. The price charged to travellers is always in excess of what others have to pay, but in the big villages the price is always more moderate than at small out-stations. With increase of trade the people living further off the route will compete, and I do not think that the question of dear provisions will ever arise. The water *en route* at every place is good, and sufficient for large numbers. With tact there is really no fear of the inhabitants interfering with one, and with civility, combined with a certain amount of firmness, the traveller is as safe in Abyssinia as in any other part of the world. Try and get up disputes, and the native will enjoy a row as well as any Irishman at Donnybrook Fair. Keep quiet, humour them, pay for what you want, give a few trifling presents, and you will get their value back fourfold. Ask a native to show you the best place for shooting, and when you can do so always kill something for him as well, and he will be only too glad to help you find game, and think you a good fellow for giving him food for himself and his family.

With a little time, then, and more intercourse with Christians, the trade and country will soon develop; with Mahomedans and Abyssinians it will be more difficult, as the two religions are equally fanatical, and the Abyssinian always boasts that the Moslem has never yet been able to do anything against his country, and that they are the oldest

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Christians and the only Christians near Mecca that have never acknowledged conquest or the religion of Mahomedans.

On my return to Suakim I found that the few months' absence had made a great change in the place—a change for the worse in every way. When I left in the first week of April the environs had got to about their old normal state. Herds of breeding camels dotted the surrounding plains, flocks of sheep and goats fed for miles from the lines of fortifications, the natives' huts were again pitched around the wells and on the neighbouring ridges, and the power of Osman Digna seemed broken and he was no more believed in. The remains of the expedition were visible; the 60th Rifles were encamped on the southern part of the harbour and some small show of force existed, although the majority of the troops had left.

How different in the middle of July!—the camp all gone, a few men-of-war in the harbour, and a transport or two, Egyptian steamers condensing, and no signs of trade or activity outside the fortifications, hardly an animal to be seen round the town. From a promising condition when I left, the town had passed into a state of siege. I was glad to get home and have a talk about what was going on, and I must say I hardly believed when I heard of the change that had taken place everywhere. I could see the “let it slide” policy of the home Government. Three months after the blood-letting at Tamaai and El Teb, and the massacre of thousands of unoffending people and useful subjects and the loss of so many brave Englishmen, the position was just the same as ever it was before, and much worse than when the policy of abandonment was first propagated. The wonderful and extraordinary way in which things were being carried on amused me, but at the same time I was angry—not angry as

known in its home meaning, but in an oriental and apathetic way.

Three Kings of Brentford! a Commodore commanding the Suakim puddle, a Marine Colonel commanding one or two forts and a house, and a smart and capable man, an English engineer officer, commanding the Egyptian troops and Eastern Soudan, which had grown so small in dimensions that the Governor-General could ride round his territory in five minutes! The force defending the town was larger than that with which some of the generals in India in olden days had to make their conquests and fight big battles, and they were attacked by about equal numbers of unclothed, undisciplined savages, only kept together by a stronger fanatical zeal than their own, and by ignorance of what was going to be done. They had heard of abandonment, which they did not understand. If it had been explained to them it would have been different; if they had been told what they ought to do, what was expected from them, and had been led gradually up to the point that they were their own masters and should no more be taxed, and that they would be left alone, Mahdism would have had no attractions for them. On the contrary, they knew very well that fighting had taken place and people had been killed, that their friends—Abdullas, Achmeds, Hameds, Mahomeds, etc.—had been killed, but still where were the English conquerors? They were not outside the town, they did not go away from their ships, and they did not prevent raiding. There can be no doubt that they had the greatest contempt for us as administrators; our valour they were willing to acknowledge. They looked upon us as an amphibious nation that could not live long away from

water, and, like the turtle, could keep on land only for a short time.

It was on the first night of my return that I had an example of what was going on, as before dinner was half over firing took place from three directions, the nearest point being just about 1,000 yards from my house, from H Redoubt, that had been abandoned. What with the heat during the day, the months of July and August were lively. The 24 hours used to be passed usually in this way: Just before daylight the most discordant noises from the Egyptian bugles; firing all round from the forts; musketry and shell practice by the Egyptians, which used to continue till nearly eight; often enough bands were still practising till nearly nine, and one tune which was diligently practised nearly every morning by the drum and bugle band was the "Dead March" in *Saul*, a lively air when one was down with fever. Then at 8 a.m. the Egyptian condensing ships used to start their music all out of tune and by nine o'clock the town was well warmed by the sun. This used to continue till just before sunset and then there would be more rifle practice, and shell practice from H.M.'s ships; then a walk or a game of lawn tennis; then dinner on the roof, and at about a quarter to nine, nearly as regular as clock-work, would come the first volley from the rebels, sometimes on one side of the town, sometimes the other, and if they were very many from three points at the same time. There was hardly a night from July to September on which we were not fired at in a systematic manner, and nearly always from the same points. Life was about as agreeable as what some of our bigoted friends in England promise us in the next world; and the sulphur smell was a reality. As a pyrotechnic display it was amusing, and I should not like to

say how many shell and small arm rounds were fired nightly. If I remember right, one evening from forts and ships 123 shell were got through and over 3,000 rounds of Remington and machine guns, Gatlings, &c. The heavy boom of the ships' guns, the short crack of the rifles, and the peculiar grumbling noise of the machine guns made a nightly concert—perfect quiet from the town as far as voices were concerned, and not a word of command to be heard—answered from the desert by the shouts of the dervishes abusing the English as Christian dogs and the Arabs in the town as infidels and sons of canine parentage, winding up with a spluttering volley, fired at random. The dervishes used to fire from 2,500 yards' distance down to 800 yards, and it was interesting to watch the flash from their rifles and to time the arrival of the bullets. Their firing was atrocious; they had not a dozen decent shots among them. The bullets used sometimes to fall short, sometimes fall as spent shots in the town, and others flew clear over it. The short shots always heralded their arrival by a peculiar little flop in the water, often disturbing some peaceful shoal of sardines or "lady fish" on the surface, the place of striking being known by the phosphorescent light made by the fish darting from the spot. The shot that fell in the town used to strike against the mat huts, and, if the inmates were awake, a few grumbles and curses were the result. The overhead bullets would fly along, and after passing, the peculiar sighing sound used to be heard, which always denoted "no danger." The ricochet bullets always made more noise, a sort of cross between the sighing sound and whistling. What was hardest to get accustomed to was the peculiar "put" of a near bullet, with the simultaneous thud made by striking

against some building or woodwork. Later on, when some of their decent shots got the range, they would open fire from H Redoubt on my house; the white wall of the top story behind the lower roof made a good target, as the lights on the dinner-table reflected against the wall, and at last when the force that came from Hashem used to fire from H Redoubt we had to put out lights as they had our range too well.

I shall never forget the first night they got our range properly. I and one or two others were sitting in our long arm-chairs, and an argumentative trio were sitting at the end of the dinner-table finishing their pegs, when a bullet struck the roof within a yard of them, and knocked up the dust; the lights went out at once, and the next volley was not so well directed.

The rubber did not take place in that part of the roof that evening, but in the ante-room of the top story, which was protected from the H Redoubt fire by a thick wall. There was very good shooting that evening, and two townspeople got wounded, and there were many narrow shaves. My house got hit on many occasions, as it offered the best mark, and all the lights showed to the north. There is one bit of furniture that will bear its mark as long as it is a bit of furniture, viz., a sideboard in the dining-room, which has a panel shot through, the bullet making a clean hole through the front side and went out through the back, breaking a vinegar bottle and leaving its neighbouring bottle, containing whisky, intact. Two or three bullet-holes in the staircase and verandah are marks that will last longer than Osman Digna will. It is astonishing, considering the firing lasted from June till well on in December, that such little damage was done. One Royal

Engineer got a scalp wound from a bullet, and he was the only Englishman hurt.

Seven or eight Egyptian soldiers got wounds, but none of them serious ones. Four or five natives were killed, or died of wounds, and about 70 were wounded, mostly by spent shots. A few cattle were also killed and wounded. It must have cost the dervishes at least half a ton of lead for each person hit, while the defenders, taking into consideration the weight of the shells, perhaps expended nearly the same for a like result. Hardly a night passed, however, without some dervishes being killed or wounded, and on some nights they lost rather heavily. H.M.S. *Briton* bagged one night eleven with one broadside, having trained all their guns on H Redoubt and fired them when the natives had occupied it and were firing on the town. This kept them away for a few nights till the Hashem people came back, and they contented themselves by firing from Cemetery ridge, another 1,000 yards further off. The electric light played a great part in the defence of the town, and it was very pretty when the three lights were turned on from the centre and both flanks of the town. The shore light was at Fort Carysfort in the centre of the position near Sharter gate, and the flanks were lighted from H.M.S. *Albacore* and *Dolphin*, in back bay and in the northern arm of the harbour, now called Dolphin Creek.

At first the Arabs could not make the electric light out, and ran away from it, thereby giving a chance to use the machine guns and rifles at them; but in a few nights they got wiser, and as soon as they saw the electric light being turned on they used to get flat on the ground and remain there till it was turned off, and then commence firing again. Any little bit of cover or a medium sized tuft of grass or

stone is ample protection from the electric light if the person on the ground keeps the obstacle in front of him. To make the electric light effective it wants to be much higher placed than what it was at Suakim, and, if possible, a machine gun put above it, as better aim can be taken. I remember one night an experiment taking place with the light at Fort Carysfort. The friendly scouts were sent into the garden adjoining Sharter gate, and told to hide among the scattered bushes, and from the fort, which is only from 100 to 350 yards off according to distance, not one of the Arabs could be seen. If I remember right in six months we had 157 night attacks, differing in magnitude from 200 to 300 rounds up to 8,000 rounds, the latter number of empty cartridges being picked up round the dervishes' positions after one night's attack. One of the most interesting night attacks was made on the southern side of the town by the enemy from Hashem and Tamaai. The attack commenced with a feint from H Redoubt and Cemetery ridge by the Handub force, and the electric lights were all turned on the northern side of the town; under cover of the darkness of the night the Tamaai force got into the quarries, which are situated on the mainland, from 100 to 300 yards away from the town, the mainland only being divided from the town by about 80 yards of water; and the first notice we had of it was a volley from about 300 rifles, and then a quick independent fire kept up.

The rebels could be heard with the greatest ease, many of their voices recognized, when they called upon the inhabitants of the town by name to come and join the only true prophet, and leave the Christians and infidels, who would all be killed in time. It did not take long to get all the garrison of the town under arms. The



marines at the new house, as soon as they had made a breastwork of sand-bags, opened fire with their Martinis and machine gun from the roof. The whole of the Royal Engineers on Quarantine Island turned out and lined their new jetty and fired volleys. The Egyptian troops lined the nearest houses to the quarries and the hospital, and the troops in the left defence also opened fire; the ships banged away shell and fired musketry and machine guns, and the two mortars at the quarry ferry began lobbing shells into the quarry pits; the electric light was turned on, and a perfect hail of shot was kept up on the quarries for some time. Everyone in the town turned out to see the sport. The dervishes at last made a bolt from the quarries into the Arab cemetery, and from there across the open to places of safety, followed up by independent firing. In the critical moment, and just as the machine gun had a chance to do execution, it jammed. The dervishes went past the Foolah Fort, insulted its garrison, and fired on them, and were answered by the fort, which kept up a fire for some time, and when it ceased the night's amusement was over, and everything was quiet.

By the aid of the electric light, wounded people were seen; others were seen to fall, and the dead carried away by their comrades, so we knew that in the morning there would be some result and something worth going out to see. I was out soon after daylight at the quarries, and the friendly Arabs had been before me and had polished off a wounded man, and had then gone to follow up the back trail for some miles to find what bag had been made. The first dead body was within 120 yards of the south side of the town. It was the remains of a splendid black slave, well known in the town, and who, poor devil,

had to obey orders, and, I am sure, had no wish to get killed or to fight against us. He was hit through the head; round him were four pools of blood, with blood tracks away from them, showing four more people badly hit. In another quarry were six more distinct traces of blood, with tracks of blood leading towards Tamaai, showing more victims. Near the Sheik Abou Fatha's tomb was the body of an Arab who had been polished off by the "friendlies" as he would not come to terms nor renounce Mahdism. He was a fine man, and wounded in two places, the crippling wound being a broken leg. It served him right getting killed, as he asked for water, and when one of the "friendlies" came near him he tried to stab him with a knife. The "friendly," after chaffing him and calling him a "Kaffir," asked him if he wanted to go to the devil quickly, and he replied that the "friendly" would be there before him. He was then shot through the chest, and killed on the spot. The bad feeling there is now between the tribesmen is hardly to be believed, and the one murders the other on religious principle just the same as a Jesuit used to roast a Christian or *vice versa* in our good old "olden times." In A Redoubt another dead body was found, just inside the nearest bush two more, and the natives reported that at least another twenty must be killed or wounded by the tracks made by the retreating force, and that by the camel marks and those that waited behind there must have been at least 500 men to the south of the town. For some nights after this there were no demonstrations southwards, but the Hashcen force kept the Water Forts employed nightly, and the Handub force the northern lines and the men-of-war.

I am a great believer in Tommy Atkins, and I don't think there is a job too big for him to undertake, and the officers

who command him are just the same fine English gentlemen as they were always, and can hold their own with any other European nation, and in peaceful sports have no equals; but what I do say as a civilian, and as a civilian that has seen hard work, that the curse of our system is the electric telegraph, and the red tape of Downing Street and the War Office. With my ten years' experience of the country, I don't know everything; I learn a lesson every day and something new, and what I do not like to see is a man who comes out fresh from England with a home or foreign-bred fad that sits upon local experience and tells it it is wrong; that such-and-such a thing takes place in such-and-such a country, and therefore it must take place in the Soudan. There has been more harm done in the Soudan during the last year by ignorance than by anything else; in fact, a perfectly wrong system has been carried on, which will take some time to clear up.

The dervish position in and around Suakim and in the Eastern Soudan was about as follows:—Gordon, as we know, was at Khartoum, and up to April, 1884, was holding his own, and there was no very great increase in Mahdism. I have heard opinions expressed by the English staff and the majority of the English officers that it was not likely after the fights at El Teb and Tamaai the Arabs could ever be got together in large numbers again; it was also an opinion that after the battle of El Teb there would be no fighting at Tamaai. Tamaai proved that the spirit of the Arab was not broken, and there were actually more Arabs engaged at Tamaai than at El Teb, and now there can be no doubt that the end of 1884 the Mahdi and Osman Digna have more followers than they had in March, 1884. This is to be attributed to want of activity in the political department,

I don't say of want of activity amongst some individuals, but of those who were working the policy.

Had a force been sent to Berber from Suakim immediately after the battle of Tamaai, composed of cavalry, mounted infantry, mountain guns, with all those friendly Arabs that could have been got together, there would have been no obstacle in the work, no fighting, and a guarantee to the natives that the English could go up country. There would have been no road difficulty, for there was plenty of grass this year, and plenty of water and food *en route*. It would have made the wavering Amara tribes, the Hadendowies *en route*, and the Bishareens of the north and round Berber throw in their lot with the English, and the Shukeriyeh of the Atbara and Taka, the great carriers of the Soudan, would have been strong enough to overawe any of the discontented Hadendowies around Filik, and Cassala could have been supplied with provisions. The friendly people round Berber would have remained quiet, and the fact that English soldiers had appeared at Berber (mind, I do not say that the force need have remained there for any length of time) would have shown them that the Suakim-Berber route was feasible for English mounted troops, and that it could be crossed by them easily in fifteen days, and would have kept them on the side of law and order, and Berber never would have fallen in the way it did. The force sent to Berber might have been back in Suakim by the middle of May. The weather this year was all in favour of the English, and it is not till the middle of June that any excessive heat commences, and the Soudan in May may be compared to that of Egypt in August, or to the same temperature met with during August and September in the 1882 expedition, minus the damp nights caused by the high Nile.

One of the first things I did on returning to Suakim, seeing what was the position in the Soudan, was to open the question of camels with the War Office authorities, and my last letter on the subject was dated the end of September, when the Nile expedition was to take place. In this I advised the immediate purchase of camels for the Nile expedition, or for the relief of the Nile expedition in the commencement of the year. The very fact of letting the people of the Eastern Soudan know that the Nile expedition was to take place, and that the country was to be abandoned when Khartoum was relieved, would have altered things materially, and there a large number of animals could have been obtained, especially through Massowah, which with its environs were entirely free from dervishes, and by working the camel business north of Suakim there was every chance of keeping the inhabitants from Mahdism, as they would be making a large profit from the English by the sale of their camels, instead of having them taken away by the dervishes for the good of their religion. I tried to impress on the authorities that it was cheaper to buy the camels and pay their owners to act as camel-men than it was to leave them to the tender mercies of the Mahdi and his followers, who found a source of supply from them, and who little by little coerced them into fanaticism. How true my information and my last letter to the War Office in September proved to be before the end of December, when the staff in Cairo, Admiralty, and War Office all were turned into amateur camel buyers, and could not get hold of the animals they required and had at last to fall back on the Somali country and Indian authorities to get them transport! I know for a certainty that many camels used on the Nile and Suakim came from Nejd, and

how did they come? *viâ* the desert to Cairo, and then by rail from there to Suez or forwarded *viâ* the Nile, when they could have been got direct.

What was done in one department was very much the same in the others; all lacked, I don't say personal intelligence, but information, and when information was given them it was doubted. It was not believed by the Suakim officials that some of the men employed daily on the works and at Quarantine Island were living every evening with the rebels, and used to go to and from Hasheen. With the native instinct of copying and learning how things are done, that when it was decided to put down mines in the positions that the rebels fired from every night, that three mines were taken away before any result happened. They used to cut the electrical communications and then dig them up and carry them away (the mines were first to be exploded by electrical communications from the forts; the wires were cut at night). Then dummy lines were put down from the forts, and electrical communication put to the inside of the barrels where the battery was placed to explode the charge, with a network of strings, so anyone crossing them would certainly be killed. So sensitive were these that one night at the outside of the water forts an explosion took place, and the search in the morning, when a bag of natives was expected, showed no trace of a native having been there, but a wretched hare was found dead with part of his head blown off, evidently by a stone which had struck him by the explosion. The poor animal had sacrificed itself for the good of science, plainly showing that there is little chance of anyone being greatly harmed by an explosion of gun cotton when below what I may call the cutting force of the radius of shock, as the hare in this case must have

been blown to atoms if it had been a big animal; so the results of the only mine that did any execution at Suakim were most curious. I shall never forget, as far as the enemy were concerned, the night of the last mine explosion. The credit of the affair was due to the torpedo officer of H.M.S. *Carysfort*. He was a naval officer who was not to be beaten. The natives had pulled up all sorts of mines, and he had his own patent in store for them. From what he told me, he had a charge of 32lbs. of gun cotton put into a big barrel full of stones, and sunk into the rise up to the ditch of H Redoubt, the most sheltered part of the enemy's position, whence they used to shoot nightly. Into this barrel were four dummy electrical wires, so that they might be found and cut; then nearer the barrel a network of strings, all dummies as well. The rebels had no doubt seen or got information of the mine, and the great trouble that had been gone to to put it down, and were delighted at the idea of getting hold of another of the Christians' infernal machines. The barrel was heavier than the ordinary ones put down before, and took more men to lift it. The contact was made by a battery inside the barrel by a column of quicksilver, which when tilted made the contact, and the result was awful. About nine o'clock we were sitting on the roof, having just finished dinner; not a shot had been fired that night, and a flash, followed by the dull, heavy explosion that shook our house, was the first we knew of what had taken place. The night was still and damp, with a slight north-westerly breeze blowing, and the smoke from the explosion came over our house in a dense cloud. We could smell burnt flesh and clothes wafted by the breeze, and Dr. Galbraith, the Egyptian Surgeon-Major, who was sitting next me in his long arm-chair, immediately said

"Burnt human flesh." There was a dead silence, and so still was the atmosphere that when the echoes of the report had died away we could distinctly hear the calls from the *Carysfort* and the northern fort, "What was that explosion?" from the former; "Your mine," from the latter. Not a shot was fired that night after this, and we all resolved to be up early next morning to see what damage had been done.

Just as daylight was breaking I started off in my sleeping clothes with my clerk and two servants to see the result. I could see the torpedo lieutenant of the *Carysfort* hurrying back to his ship, and officers and soldiers from the forts making towards H Redoubt, but I never expected such a sight as I then witnessed. About eighty yards our side of H Redoubt I came across a leg blown off above the knee, just as if it had been amputated; then part of a skull with a big fuzzy wig attached, and four or five bodies strewn around. On getting to the top of the redoubt I could see parts of human remains in all directions, and on the top of the redoubt itself the body of a well-known Suakim Arab. The upper part of the body was perfectly intact to the knees, and without a scratch. Both legs under the knees had been cut off as if by a knife, and the Remington rifle which he held in his hand was stockless. I suppose that, standing on the redoubt, the upper part of the body was above the force of the explosion. The men who had lifted out the barrel were blown into atoms, and the Arabs who came out of the town remarked that it would be no easy matter to put them together in Paradise. Regrets were expressed by some of the Arabs, and indecent joy from others. Most of the bodies that were only partly destroyed were recognized. They consisted of some of the surround-



ing tribes, Hadendowies and Amarars. One body was thrown at least 80 yards, and looked, with the hundreds of small stones sticking out of it, more like a tipsy cake than anything else. It was not a pleasant sight, and what with the old crows hopping away with a bit of flesh, and the kites swooping down and taking other bits, and the dogs running off with others, the remains were pretty well distributed. There were many blood tracks leading away towards Handub, and, judging by the marks, there must have been at least another 15 men killed or wounded. I remained on the ground about half an hour, and then went home full of pity for the men, but at the same time with a feeling that something at last had happened that would put a stop to the nightly firing from H Redoubt, which made sleep in our verandah impossible.

I had not been at home over half an hour, and was looking through my telescope watching the Tamaai, Hasheem, and Handub roads, when I saw a column of smoke go up at Handub, and in about a minute afterwards heard the report of another explosion. Great excitement prevailed all the morning amongst the rebels. About 20 cavalry had come from Tamaai, a force was also out from Hasheem, and another from Handub. The cavalry came within a mile of the water forts, but a few shells soon sent them back, and they then, at about 11 o'clock, retired to their stations. The remains of the Arabs blown up were placed in a cart, and carried away about a mile from the left water fort on the Tamaai road, and there turned out for the relatives to come and claim them. The Arabs had such a dread of the place that they fancied another trap had been laid for them, and they would not go near the tarpaulin on which the bodies were placed. In a few days the birds, hyenas, and

jackals had made an end of them. It only shows what communications the Arabs have, and of what little good are the local police, as one of the Arabs had been in the town the day before. The Arabs knew all of our movements, and we little of theirs. They can see every ship that goes and comes, and find out what she has brought from their spies. We can never tell if they have 2,000 or 10,000 men with them, or what they intend to do. They have information of all the Nile movements, and even what is going on at Khartoum and Cassala, and in all parts of the Soudan. The fatal mistake we are making with the Intelligence Department is employing men who know nothing about the country, and going to England for our Intelligence officers who have only European experience, little or no Cape experience, and absolutely no Indian frontier experience.

Our treaty with King John is put on the shelf, and all our labours are being frittered away when all the time King John is willing to help us make diversions, and send his flying columns from Galabat towards Gedarif, and to Cassala from Sanheit and Geera. There are sheiks Saleh Bey of Gedarif, Owd el Kerrim Pasha of the Shukeriyehs, Sheik Agheel of the Hamram Sword Hunters (an old friend of Sir Samuel Baker's and the Guard officers of the shooting expeditions of 1883-4), old Bacheet Bey of the Beni Amers, who are all willing to help and are still loyal; but it still seems to me that the Government do not care, or do not know, perhaps, what could be done with a combination of these sheiks, backed up by King John, against Mahdism. The disturbing element, Egypt, has been withdrawn. It was Egypt that pushed these sheiks against King John, and as they are all border sheiks it was by intriguing and coercing

these people that made them a barrier between the high and low countries. Before they were natural friends, and by Egypt withdrawing they became so again. Now abandonment has been promulgated, I cannot see why one Englishman cannot be appointed as frontier officer to look after the business. If Massowah were made a base, and an advance were planned from there, it would be a longer and more tedious route, but it would be a route where there is little chance of the water question ever being an annoying one, and where grain and food supplies are obtainable, and enough transport from the Shukeriyeh alone to carry anything wanted for a march on Khartoum, and the communications would require but a small guard comparatively speaking, as the tribes along the road would all be friendly. I have had a long experience of the Sherreefs of the Soudan and Arabia, and those who make a point of travelling among the Mahomedan nations, but no use is made of them.

A Sherreef or Seyed of the Soudan claims to be the direct descendant of the prophet, either through the two big families of the Oons and Mutaleeb, the great branches of the Mahomedan race at Mecca and Medina. The former are supposed to be the parent stock of the Soudan Sherreefs or Ashrufs. They do the religious legal business of the tribes. When met in the desert or being visited at their huts their hands are always kissed, and the whole of the Soudan tribesmen acknowledge and look up to them. All the sheiks, and from the highest to the lowest tribesmen, kiss their hands and pay great deference to them. They have hitherto stood aloof from Mahdism, and have not countenanced Mahomed Achmed in any way, and what they are to be admired for from an English point of view is that they

have had the courage of their opinions in denouncing Mahdism as wrong, and have been at the same time perfectly straight in their ideas regarding abandonment. They saw the cause of the rebellion, and knew that it was more from the corrupt and wretched way in which the tribes were governed than anything else ; that there had been ever since Gordon had retired a systematic attempt to put down their local influence, and to treat them with contempt ; that they were not, as formerly, exempt from tribute, and had to pay their tribe tax, a tax, perhaps, not bad in its way, and an easy one to collect if properly worked, but as carried out by the Egyptian minor officials, one of the worst means of putting power into the hands of those who do not know how to use it, and to whom it generally means license. For instance, say the local head of the police is told to depute some of his local force to go to such a place to collect a tax from such and such a tribe or sheik. He gets a receipt from the head office to give to the sheik ; he is supposed to get the money, but the governor, chief clerk, cashier, or who ever gives the paper, knows very well that the receipt is worth something, and takes a receipt for the full amount from the head of police. The head of police passes this on to his subordinate, say a bullock-pasha, and gets something from him to pay for what he is out of pocket, and something besides, as he runs a certain pecuniary risk. The usual conclusion is this : the bullock-pasha goes to the tribe, charges 50 per cent. more for transport than he should, divides the plunder with the natives from whom he hires the camel, takes produce from the tribe at his own valuation, and returns after running up a bill to collect the tribute amounting to nearly as much as the tribute is worth. He also comes back with a camel or two, some goats and sheep,

perhaps a slave girl or boy, and then divides the spoil with his superiors.

There is theft all round, and the native is, as can well be understood, very angry. His anger before used to go for nothing, but it counts now. Change the way of collecting the taxes, send for the head man of the tribe, say that you have to pay so much per annum, and leave the sheik to deal with his tribe, and there would be an end to the trouble. There would be a chance, perhaps, of a very truculent sheik saying "I will pay nothing." Then there would be a cause for dealing with him, but there is very little chance of his saying so to a European who treated him properly. To an Egyptian he always tried to stave off the inevitable, and with a Levantine as well. The curse of the Soudan in one way has been Levantine officials, the most worthless class, as a rule, that have ever been employed; not one of them has ever made his mark except in doing harm to the Government that employs them. They are known by the natives of the Soudan, and are looked down upon. Curiously enough the annals of the Soudan cannot show one that has made himself a name. The grandest man I ever came across in the Soudan, one that was a Bayard *sans peur* and *sans reproche*, was Tewfik Bey. He was supposed, as I said before, to be a Cretan Jew. No matter what he was, whether Jew, Jesuit, Buddhist, Mahommedan, or Christian, he was a perfect brave man. He was one of the only Egyptian officials that lived on his income and pay; he scorned a bribe, and was one of those officials rarely met with, who used to say, "Help me to do good and I will help you. Show me anything that I can do to open and improve my 'Governorate' and I am with you. I intend to live and perhaps die in the country, and I want to see improvement."

I used to call on Tewfik Bey, and he copied his master, Tewfik Pasha the Effendina—one wife, a simple, homely house, and no remark made about Christian dogs. There was a Mahommedan welcome, which is a hearty one, and if only one could rewrite the Koran as interpreted by the learned Indian Mahommedans of the nineteenth century there would be better feeling between the religions than there is now.

We wander, we talk nonsense, we go wool-gathering, perhaps from the heat, and perhaps we see how little the question is understood. Certain it is we close the year poorer, humbler, perhaps, and with the perfect conviction that we are not advanced one iota in the settlement of the Soudan question. In analyzing the actions of the officials we cannot see that they are a success, as we do not know what they have done except to lose foothold over the coast and have not been able to retain the environs of Suakim, which they had in the spring. They have done nothing they can congratulate themselves on except the erection of a few wretched outer-line forts which the natives can get behind. The forts cannot open fire because they shoot into the town. True there is a mud wall, which the first good shower will destroy, and which serves to annoy the friendly rebels to such an extent that they have to walk round it and come through the water. It does not even keep the prisoners that want to run away to Osman Digna inside the town, and seventeen of them went "over the old mud wall" one night without being seen, and if seventeen did it seven hundred perhaps might have come in without being seen if they had wanted to, but it seems they do not.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EVENTS BEFORE THE 1885 EXPEDITION.

THE military people are amusing themselves by building jetties and 18-inch gauge railways. The former, being made of white wood, without any covering, may last 18 months, while iron screw piling would be nearly as cheap and last for ever. Funny people the English! The railway is a splendid one, goes sometimes about six miles an hour. The engines are two in number and are called by the Arabs "Work" and "No Good." "Work" behaves itself as a rule, but not always. "No Good" is a real bad lot, a bad-tempered engine in every way; it will run off the line and carry carriages with it, and then there are sundry little accidents and people get slightly hurt.

The Arabs abuse this engine, and what made them certain it was a bad one was when it upset a couple of carriages of railway rails over poor Tedelar, who, from chief of the Abyssinian scouts, has been promoted to the peaceful occupation of head man of a large gang of coolies, employed in putting down the line round the fortifications and to the camps for the troops when they return from the Nile. Tedelar was standing near the line where "No Good" was

bringing rails to, and all at once "No Good" runs off the line and upsets two carriage loads of rails on Tedelar. It is a miracle that he was not crushed and killed at once. The rails were all across his chest and legs, and by the time he was got out he was insensible, his eyes nearly starting out of his head, and blood coming from his mouth and nose. He was taken into hospital on Quarantine Island and very kindly looked after by everyone, but especially by the Royal Engineer officers who had been at Tamaai with him.\* Tedelar had broken his leg in two places, just above where it was broken at Tamaai.

After this accident the Arabs were very chary of "No Good." The 18-inch gauge being put down is quite useless for commercial purposes, and will not last long unless great care is taken, as the ground on which it is put down is so salt. There is some talk of making a metre-gauge railway, but unless Mahdism is going to be put a stop to it will do no good; the time for railways in the Soudan has gone, as there is no trade left, and until the trade comes back a railway will be useless unless Government will pay so much percentage per annum till the railway pays. As public works I don't think much of what is being done, and the whole affair is too trashy to recommend itself in a serious light; there seems to be no plan except by throwing out a few jetties with crooked pierheads instead of putting down jetties where two or three steamers could lay alongside and discharge from all hatches at the same time so as to give quick dispatch.

The political department is not much better than the

\* Tedelar died at Massowah of small-pox. From commencing life as being a great friend of the French Mission at Massowah he turned brigand, and in a year from the time was caught, imprisoned, put in charge of his fellow brigands, fought at Baker's El Teb, English Tamaai, leg broken twice and died of small-pox—a busy year for him, with plenty of change and variety.



jetties, perhaps not as good, but don't think it is the fault of the workmen on the spot, as I know they get true information; but do they work on it to follow out the policy of abandonment, or are they hampered from home? I think the latter. It seems so curious to me that the Soudan is abandoned, and that the garrisons by the word of abandonment are cut off. If the Soudan was to be abandoned, why cry it before the foreigners in the country were taken out? What have the foreigners done to be left in the lurch? Certainly some of them have winked at the slave trade and given goods on credit to slave dealers. By doing so they have got into the hands of the slave dealers, and certainly a slave dealer, now the country is given up to anarchy, will pay none of his debts. Stewart has been sacrificed with his companions by the Nile route, when he could have got out *via* the Blue Nile, and the onus rests with the political department for not opening up the Suakim-Berber route in the spring. The onus of Gordon's position also rests with the political department, as they abandoned the country without understanding the meaning of the work that it comprehended.

No one will ever convince me that the English Cabinet was not led by the nose by Egyptian bondholders and the Egyptian officials in the matter of the Nile route. That the most straightforward, the most honest, and without doubt one of the most capable of Englishmen had vetoed the Nile, and he had, therefore, to be superseded for the relief expedition and the command in Egypt made so important that it wanted two big guns to look after what was going on. One would not burst his reputation and sacrifice his life on a possible, but, at the same time, an impracticable scheme, from which no good could come; a scheme that, backed up by the inherent pluck of Englishmen, and the never-failing pocket

of the English taxpayer, must in time reach its destination, but in what period, and if soon enough, to stave off what must come sooner or later to every Soudan town, namely, a return to semi-barbarism on account of no commerce. Commerce opened the Soudan, and modern commerce is a never-failing guide to general or politician to the cheapest and best route to any interior. The water picnic *viâ* the Nile is one of the most splendid firework schemes that has ever been put before an admiring world.

From what I have heard from foreigners (not that I believe much in their exploring and colonizing experience), they seem to admire it for its pig-headedness and obstinacy carried on against all the weight of evidence that has been collected. From German, Italian, and Frenchman I have heard the same remark, "You English will stick at nothing, and telling you you are in the wrong only makes you more obstinate." I perfectly agree with them, and I perfectly agree with their idea that the Cairo authorities know nothing about the Soudan, and that the chief advisers now there have speculated largely in land along the Nile route for the late Soudan Nile Valley railroad, and who naturally had more weight in the Councils than the advocates of the Suakim route, and must have immediately said something like this —

"Good God, gentlemen, what do you intend to do? Relieve Khartoum *viâ* Suakim or Massowah, when you leave the whole route *viâ* the Nile free to a rebel advance? Why, before you are half across the Suakim-Berber route the dervishes will have taken Wady Halfa, Assouan, Siout, and very likely will be selling our wives and children in the Boulac and Old Cairo slave market. We shall have no opera at Cairo, no English visitors to fleece, no antiques to

sell, and there will be only a mere existence in Alexandria ; we shall have to live on refugee ships, fed on salt pork and beef. No ; Arabi's scare and the cholera have been enough for us, and now you want us to go through a Mahdi's scare."

Egypt's choice was no doubt right ; they were the most interested, and knew what they required better than the Soudan did. The General who had saved them from the ogre Arabi was the man to save them from the dreaded Mahdi. I have, as a civilian, studied the routes ; I have studied what had been done by Lord Wolseley on former occasions, and I came to the conclusion last September, embodied in my letter to the War Office, that the Nile column could not succeed : time and stream were against it, and there is no nation in the world that would have called upon its soldiers to do the herculean task set the Nile column. I do not wish it to be thought by anyone who may read this that my ideas have changed one bit before I wrote this or since. Everyone whom I talked to had the same ideas on the subject. Since 1880 I have been called a rebel, and a rebel I suppose I shall remain for the rest of my life. I have held to my opinions and what I know to be the case, and if my opinions are unpalatable they may be listened to or put on one side as useless.

As I have said before, in the name of Clive, Napier, and other old Indian Generals, what has become to the English race that we should be bullied in the way we have been at Suakim ? Daily could be seen the scouts of the investing force from Hasheem, Handub, and Tamaai come from the camps and take up their position round the town, making the cordon round the patrol, which consisted once of mounted marines (horse marines, or marine mounted infantry), changed now to the Egyptian cavalry and the

camel corps, used to go their round about 2,000 yards from the outside forts. With a good telescope one could see the dervishes skirmishing with them—sometimes long shots used to be fired, and when a larger bunch of the rebels got together the Water Forts or H.M.S. *Dolphin* would open fire on them. Some of the *Dolphin's* shells were very well placed, but the range used to be too long for accurate practice. However, they sometimes wounded or killed a rebel.

I don't think that under 4,000 yards they got a chance of a good family shot, and from the flash it always gave time for the majority of the rebels to get into a place of safety before the shell burst. I often thought that the best plan would be to fire guns simultaneously pointed, say 100 yards right and left of the place where the groups were, and then more dervishes would have been bagged. Some of the rebels' camels soon got used to the shells and never took any notice of their bursting. One could always tell when fresh camels from up country were being used, as they invariably bolted at full gallop if the shells came close to them.

We had one very pretty morning's skirmish. About 1,200 dervishes from Tamaai, Hasheem, and Handub made a demonstration, and for what object it was made could never be found out. The mounted infantry, cavalry, and camel corps belonging to the Egyptians went out, and a duel at long distances was kept up, the rebels hardly coming within good range of the forts or ships. Some of the shells just reached the isolated groups of dervishes and did some execution. The Egyptians also on one occasion got within 400 yards and interchanged volleys and independent shooting with the enemy, of which they killed and wounded several. It was a very pretty sight, and from my verandah, through my telescope, I could see everything that went on most perfectly.

One Egyptian cavalryman got very badly wounded by a bullet, which struck him on the right shoulder and divided an artery leading from the neck. Dr. Galbraith, however, managed to pull the man through, and the wonderful cures he has made smacks more of tales from the "Arabian Nights" than anything else. His patients are doubtless good subjects to work on, and do not feel pain like a European; but some cases he has got round if they had been Englishmen must have succumbed. Being of a retiring disposition he has said little about them. Some of the cases have been mentioned in the English medical papers. The enemy were all dressed in the dervish uniform, the white blouse with the patchwork pattern of blue and red. When new the uniform used to look most curious, and was a bad colour for bush and country work, being so conspicuous at a long distance; when it got dirty it was not so bad.

The uniform of the dervishes has improved since Tamaai last year. Then there were hardly two men who had a dress alike, and they only wore small pieces of red and blue cloth or any other coloured cloth, sown hap-hazard over their clothes. Now, from what we hear from the spies brought in, nearly all the tribesmen have commenced to use the Mahdi's uniform. One of the most curious signs of the times and of the change that had come over the tribesmen was that they had done away with their luxurious locks; the term dervish and frizzy-wig were no longer synonymous. What a wrench it must have been for many of the "mashers" of the Eastern Soudan to shave their heads and get rid of their lovely locks! The nearest approach to the sacrifice they underwent must have been during our civil war. History does not say, however, that the Roundheads submitted their cavalier prisoners to this indignity.

The tribesmen, as a rule, think more of their hair than anything else, and their beautiful wigs are not the work of a month. The time they spend in their barbers' shops takes up a good portion of their leisure hours. The barbers are, as a rule, ladies, of not the strictest moral behaviour, which may partly account for the patronage they receive. The way in which the hair is generally worn is to concentrate it on the crown of the head; it is then brushed up and frizzed, the hair that grows round the head being frizzed downwards to reach the shoulders, making a perfect protection to the back of the neck. The hair is thoroughly saturated with grease, on which sandal-wood dust, or the dust of any other scented wood, is placed, and the wig then becomes of a yellowish-brown colour. It looks very smart at first, but after an hour or two in the sun the grease begins to run, and the dripping falls all over the shoulders and clothes. There is no doubt that the style the hair is worn in the Eastern Soudan is a great protection to the head against the sun, from which even natives sometimes suffer, especially those who live high up in the mountains, when they have to do much plain work in the summer time. The cure for sunstroke is by bleeding and putting salt in the ears, on which water is poured. I got a very bad headache once when shooting in summer time and tried the experiment of putting salt in my ears and dropping water on it, and found great and nearly instantaneous relief.

The rebels managed one way and another to cut off a good many people and cattle belonging to the town; the people they mostly killed. I saw one morning a poor woman brought in on an angareb in a dreadful plight. She had some eight or nine wounds. Her story was that she had gone out the day before with her little grandchild, of about

four years old, and a donkey, to pick up sticks to sell in the town, and when about two miles south of Suakim she had been surprised by some of the rebel cavalry, and on her refusing to go with them to Tamaai she had been attacked and left for dead. Her grandchild, a bright little boy, was cut in half by a sword cut. Her tale was a true one, as the body of the child was found, and it had been brutally hacked about. How the poor old lady had lived through the night, wounded as she was, was a wonder. No European woman could have survived the shock to the system. The Soudanese are marvels, and they cannot have the same feelings as others. To me they seem lower in the scale of feelings even than the ape tribe, who really seem to feel pain and is a sensitive animal. I cannot help feeling that the end of the Haden-dowie and Amarar is not far off, and that they will be improved off the face of the earth at nearly the same pace as the Red Indians in America. They all have their good points, which, however, are outnumbered by their vices. Whisky and chain-lightning spirits and small-pox have done their work in America, and before the war and Mahdism broke out, absinthe and spirits of wine coloured to represent brandy was doing its work wherever the eastern Soudani got touch with the Greek and Levantine. Small-pox also claimed its victims, but there is one thing to be said about the Eastern Soudan Arab, that he took to vaccination and believed in it; at the same time, he was willing to go in for the usual charms, and wore amulets as well against the disease. The liquor question will in future be a great point to be considered by those responsible for the government of the country. I do not see how it can be allowed to continue at the same rapid strides in which it was going on in 1881 and 1882. The Mahommedans of the Soudan nearly

all take kindly to liquor, and as long as they stuck to the native distilled spirits made from dhurra and the boosa, or beer also made from dhurra, they could not come to harm. The boosa stupefies, but, I am told by the doctors, does not leave any bad results. But since the natives have been supplied with bad absinthe, mastic, brandy, spirits of wine, and other poisons it has had a deplorable effect on them.

It was not till the close of December, 1884, that we really heard what straits poor General Gordon was put to, and now could be seen the folly of the Nile route. And what a lasting disgrace it will be to those that have had the management of the business. Distance must dull pain, and I don't think the people of England will ever understand what we in the Soudan feel on the subject. What is a policy to some is death to others, and abandonment and the example of our callous behaviour must have a great deal of after-effect on all those that are educated enough to understand what is expected from a civilized nation. The Government have behaved towards the Soudan as utter barbarians.

General Stephenson paid Suakim a visit at the close of the year, and we were all very pleased to see him. He came just at a gay time, as we had got up our New Year's sports for the garrison, at which he was present. We had a very successful and large meeting. The sports consisted of horse, camel, foot, and other races, and what I think caused more excitement than anything else, namely, the tugs of war among teams of different branches of the service. The Egyptian soldiers were by far the biggest and heaviest men, and they thought they were certain to win and beat a good many of the English teams; but they stood no chance with the men of the Marine Artillery, who pulled them over with the greatest ease, much to the delight of the English and



disgust of the Egyptians. The native camel race was amusing, and the riding was very fair; but the crowd and the numerous flags made the camels very shy, and they could not be seen at their best. The New Year's sports being over, and General Stephenson leaving, we soon settled down into our ordinary humdrum life again, and the only excitement was getting ready for the arrival of some troops who we supposed would, as soon as the Nile expedition arrived at Berber, make some demonstration against Osman Digna again. However, everything was of the vaguest, and even General Stephenson did not know what was going to be the end of it all, or what was really going to be done. We all knew that General Gordon was about at the end of his resources and hard up for food, and it was with great difficulty that any authentic news could be got from him owing to his being so closely invested.

There was now hardly ever any firing into the town; the sandbag fort having been made to the north of H Redoubt, and the small gauge railway being laid down kept the rebels away, at least they did not fire, but doubtless were prowling round the whole time taking stock. Their spy system was no doubt very superior to ours in every way, as it was with the utmost difficulty our Intelligence Department could arrive at their numbers, while they could see every ship that entered or left our harbour, and from their look-out places they could easily see if many troops were discharged or not. They also had an unfailing source of information by the number of tents that were put up, as they had a very good idea of how many soldiers lived in each tent, and they estimated our numbers accordingly. We could not see their camp with the exception of a few huts, and their camp fires were seldom or ever visible. There being no census of the tribes,

and so little known of the Soudan, except off the beaten tracks, it was impossible to estimate their numbers, and spies are always wrong in numbers after about two thousand is reached. One thing we were all certain of, that there was hardly a Soudan tribe or sub-tribe that was not represented and that there were also some Abyssinians with Osman Digna, viz., the Barrambaras of the Dembelas and his servants that had caused so much trouble when he was given asylum at Sanheit by Kusruf Bey, the then Governor. I mentioned in a former page that Baker Pasha had given instructions to Kusruf Bey to arrest him, and that the instructions were not carried out, and now he is fighting against us. Oh, you Egyptian officials, what you have to answer for!

In early February we had a spy in from Tamaai who reported that Khartoum had fallen, and that there had been great rejoicing in Osman Digna's camp. No particulars could be given, and we thought that it might be a got-up thing by Osman and his friends to win others over to his cause. How soon this news was confirmed, and what a sensation it made at Suakim! The news of the fighting at Abou Klea and to the south of Metemneh round Gubat and Abou Kru, victories, no doubt, and still showing the bulldog pluck of the Englishmen, but at what cost and what a loss of lives England could but ill spare. The whole tale of the events of January, 1885, are more like a hideous nightmare than anything else, and the only consolation there is that all the victims of this mismanagement seem to have died doing their duty. No doubt time will deaden the pain, and in the future we shall all be able to judge events in a calmer manner than what we can now, while our contempt for those who have brought about this misery is still fresh

and our blood boiling with anger at the useless sacrifice of those friends so dear to us. General Gordon had many friends among the inhabitants of Suakim, both native and European, and many were the honest tears shed at his horrible but heroic fate. There are not many well-to-do people in England that have ever felt the pangs of hunger and what it is to be only 24 hours without a meal. The only thing I wish is that some of the people who have been responsible for what has been done could be shut up in a very hot building without food for three or four days, and the only thing to look at a panorama, a changing one if possible, of the scenes of misery that have been enacted in the Soudan during January, 1885. I believe, then, if they did not go mad that they would thoroughly understand what they have brought about, and the pangs of hunger and thirst would be a reality, and they would learn what it is to suffer. Certainly, I believe, when they came out they would conscientiously and honestly try to do something for the Soudan to wipe out, if possible, what they will have to answer for in the future if they neglect what is now their duty—reparation for the horrible misery caused. What poor Gordon's feelings must have been, seeing his fellow prisoners dying by inches, and the fearful misery by which he was surrounded. The black really does not suffer to the same extent as a sensitive European, but still their faces wear the same expression of horror and despair that is depicted on their lighter-coloured brethren. Think of the thousands of famished people—women and little children—all suffering and flocking to the Palace for relief which could not be given. The Khartoum, once so flourishing and a natives' paradise, turned into a charnel-house; the shady avenues of trees bordering the promenade along the Blue

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Nile under which a well-to-do and happy population used to idle away their days bathing, smoking, and playing—what a change there must have been, and what a prospect looking forward to the final crash when the town should be given over to the undisciplined and savage hordes of the Mahdi. No pen or brush will ever be able to relate or depict the last horrors at Khartoum, no civilized person, unless he has visited the Soudan, can imagine what devil's work they are capable of; imagine everything, and still the horrors that were perpetrated may not be all, and Gordon knowing all the time that this must surely come and having to wait for it. What hours must have passed on the top of the Palace, under the shade of the big sycamore fig tree that shades the roof from the setting sun, watching for the smoke from the steamers when they leave the northern gorge. Those steamers would have brought the relief so long promised and expected, but no signs, no messenger with a letter even to say when the relief might be expected. Yes, Gordon, no one knew better than your friends at Suakim that you did your duty, and it was no fault of yours that events turned out as they did. Not only you, but many more of your friends would have only been too glad to have ended their days in such a glorious and heroic manner as you did, and as long as Englishmen are Englishmen I hope they will always remember you and the 26th January, 1885.

There have been some very unjust and ungenerous things said about the attempt made to rescue Gordon, and if the steamers had started immediately from Gubat that the fall of Khartoum would not have taken place. This I don't believe. The whole expedition was at least a month too late, and the fate of Khartoum was sealed the moment Omdurraman fell into the hands of the Mahdi. The assault

at Khartoum could have taken place before, and it was a doomed town many days before it fell. There was, no doubt, a party inside Khartoum that were entirely favourable to the Mahdi, and it was their policy—and, mind, I don't think they were to be blamed—that as Khartoum and the Soudan were to be abandoned, and that their whole property and interests were in the country of their birth, and that they could not leave it, that they wanted to make friends with the strongest power that remained, which, undoubtedly, was the Mahdi. I don't think two steamers or six steamers would have made the difference. The troops in Khartoum were at starvation point and weakened, and with the hordes the Mahdi had he could always have rushed the town, and the handful of English soldiers brought by the steamers would only have been sacrificed. Gordon would certainly have never left Khartoum to its fate if he had had the chance of getting away in one of the steamers. He, Hansel, and some others might have got away at any time, but he preferred remaining with those who had served him faithfully, trusted him, and given him their all. The natives are no fools, and they knew the carrying capacity of the steamers, and they knew pretty well the number of the column that made the desert march, and that they had many wounded to look out after, and could only just hold their own and not take the offensive. They, no doubt, put off the attack on Khartoum as long as possible, as the weaker the garrison became the less capable they were of fighting; so the longer they drove off the attack the less they were likely to suffer when they made the assault. It is a very good thing their blind fanaticism prevents them attacking our troops at night, as I believe if they had done so they would have annihilated the desert column, and certainly, if they

had attacked the force at Suakim the night before the battle of Tamaai, we should have had all our work cut out to hold our own, and then, perhaps, only driven them off after severe loss. With the well-known quick rush of the dervishes and their overwhelming numbers it is just a chance whether they could not wipe out any force like we had in the Soudan if they made their attacks on a dark night, as musketry would not have the effect it has in the day time, and the bayonet is no match for spear and shield in hand-to-hand fighting. Had we been at war with the Abyssinians we should have been certainly attacked at night.

I never could understand the Nile campaign. It has really turned out that the proposed programme had to be abandoned, and Dongola province been made the base to work from. I should think nothing but the direst necessity made it paramount that a force had to leave the river and cut across the desert to Metemneh. No doubt the force used was the pick of the army, and what they accomplished will always be looked upon as one of the finest feats of English arms. I consider the column was lucky to have escaped annihilation, and had the Arabs had better advisers, and made their second attack during that awful night march, but very few of those that composed it would ever have returned to their native country. Had the force met with a reverse and been shut up at the Gakdul wells, everything would have depended on the remains of the Nile column to relieve them. I suppose it was really like the last throw of a gamester or desperate man, and it succeeded to a certain extent. Had it been a failure, which at one time looked likely, and had the Mahdi used the whole of his available force, the result might have been too dreadful to think of. I look partly at the fall of Khartoum saving



the desert column, as another ten thousand dervishes might have changed the position of things entirely. The whole of the Mahdi's followers were busy with the loot of Khartoum and the division of spoils, and there is no doubt that the Mahdi had no time, and perhaps not the power, to get his people away from the city to turn their attention to the English relieving force. Had the Mahdi's full force been concentrated round Metemneh, or made a dash at the line of communications, no doubt the whole riverain population, the force at Berber, which at Abou Klea held aloof, and had little or nothing to do with the fight, would all have joined in, and but a remnant of the English would have got back to their base at Dongola; those that were in that province would have been safe. It will be interesting to learn at some future day the reasons Mahomed Khair had for not making his attack with his full force at Abou Klea with the others.

I lost many friends among those that were killed with the force between Dongola and Metemneh, and up till now the Soudan has already cost me over fifty of my friends, and it seems as if it demands more. I shall never forget the grief of those of the Abyssinian scouts still remaining at Suakim when they heard of Colonel Burnaby's death. He had been a good friend to them, and taken a great interest in all their doings, especially their rifle practice. They looked upon him as a great warrior, and he was just the sort of man that the half-savage sportsmen and warriors would look up to, and follow him anywhere where he led them; with him they would have no fear. Tedelar, chief of the Abyssinians, who Colonel Burnaby had the most to do with, was very cut up, and made many remarks about the stupid way in which we set to work to fight these natives. There is no

doubt a good deal in what these natives say, that we do not fight the Soudanese Arabs in the right way, and that they could soon tire us out. They never need fight an engagement unless they wish, and it is hopeless trying to blockade them; as for catching them, they go ten yards to our one, and the only real way to bring them to book would be by a quick camel corps and native auxiliaries. Cameron, the war correspondent of the *Standard*, we all greatly regretted. He had been living with us for over three months at Suakim, and was a general favourite, and a most charming companion with his many stories and dry humour. Poor General Stewart, if he had had his own way and gone across the desert from Suakim last spring there would never have been a Nile expedition, and things would have been very different. There is no satisfaction, as events have turned out, in saying, "Oh, I was right; going up the Nile in boats was wrong." Of course, everyone knows that if Englishmen are set a task they can get up the Nile in boats or in a barrel in time. "The object of the mission will be gone before you succeed." The whole thing is a matter of history now, and I suppose the public by this time know the primary cause of the failure. Whatever way it is looked at, the only thing that can be said is that our men and officers did their duty; that the crossing the Bahuyda desert was a performance that any nation might be proud of; and the rest of the business so unpleasant to write about and so disgusting to think of that it would be, if possible, better not to raise the question again. Arguing and discussing the different points will never give us back those honoured ones that we have lost, or exonerate those that have been responsible for one of the blackest pages of history of the nineteenth century. It is to be hoped, however, that the lessons learnt

will not be thrown away, and when next we go to war our troops will not be armed with rifles that are useless because the cartridges are bad, bayonets that bend, ammunition for field cannon that does not fit, and machine guns that are liable to get jammed the moment they are most wanted.

Soon after the news from the Nile, Suakim became very busy preparing for an expedition which was supposed to be for crushing Mahdism and revenging General Gordon's death. What ought to have been commenced eight months ago is now being done, and the cause and reason of everything gone. For the life of me I never could see what was the use of our Suakim expedition in 1885, unless it was to spend money and to make a military demonstration. In the eyes of the European nations I daresay it had a very good effect, as it showed that in time of danger England had resources other than what the old country possesses at home. It was the first time in the annals of the world that Englishmen and English subjects from all parts of our dominions were seen together. The Nile expedition was certainly a mixture—Canadians, West Africans, Indians, Somalis, etc. In the Suakim expedition fighting men from Australia, India, and England; labourers from all parts of the world—nearly a Babel of tongues and nationalities. It would want a volume alone to write all the details of what happened and the management and mismanagement that took place. One department was certainly unique and deserving of unlimited praise, viz., that belonging to our marine forces. Their work went on without a hitch; the way they packed the large Atlantic liners, troopers, and men-of-war away in Suakim harbour without an accident merited the greatest of praise. The plums and honours that are served out after a campaign is over generally go to the military, and the navy

does not get its share. Captain Fellowes and his staff worked night and day, and the great accumulation of work was got through with admirable precision; they had little jetty accommodation, and it was simply marvellous, seeing what good and speedy work they did. Without the navy the military would be nowhere.

At Suakim they did the whole of the landing work, and found, when the time came, a fighting contingent as well, which, as usual, came in for the hardest of the knocks. If it had been possible it would have been better to have kept the soldiers on board ship rather than to have allowed them to go on shore to the camp that was made. I never knew who was responsible for the formation of this encampment, and it was hardly credible that such a thing should have taken place. The regiments were sprinkled over the broken ground to the north of the town, and in such a manner that the only side on which there was any regularity of formation was towards the north, the furthest away from the enemy. On the west, facing Hasheem, there were isolated camps between the last tents, and the Shater wells was an open space, and it was absolutely open towards the south. Every camp, more or less, would have fired into its neighbour, the guns from the ships and forts could not have been used, and if an attack in force had taken place the soldiers must have fought it out amongst themselves with the bayonet, as any firing that took place must have killed friends and foes as well. The people in camp could not fire if an attack took place from the south without shooting into the town and the shipping, and to rely on a bayonet that most likely would bend was not the weapon I should like to be armed with to defend myself from an active Arab with a long and sharp spear. The

Arabs were very good that they did not attack in force, and contented themselves by sending only some dozens each night to annoy the camp, spear the sentries, and create general confusion. It was most jumpy work, and hardly a night went by without some sentry getting killed or wounded. The Arabs stole a horse from the Provost Marshal's tent and speared his groom; the tent was in the centre of the camp. Three or four times every night shots were fired and the alarm given, and bugles blowing, and the dull and suppressed roar of the men getting to their arms.

One night the ordnance store was attacked. The men who did it had come in from the south, had gone through the camp, and selected the ordnance enclosure as being the smallest garrisoned, the easiest got into, and the one from which an escape could be made the quickest. It resulted in several men being killed and wounded. Everyone, both in camp, on board the ships, and in the town, turned out, and a general disturbance as if a general attack had taken place. It was enough to frighten anyone and turn a man's hair grey, the way in which things went on at night-time, and I took precious good care never to be outside the walls much after sunset. I don't mind a little excitement, but I object to be stuck in the dark by an Arab, or run the risk of getting shot by a nervous sentry.

When nearly all the troops had arrived, and General Graham had come down, the camp got better placed, as the Indian contingent filled up the gap to the south, and they kept a very good watch over everything. What ought to have been done was never to have had less than two sentries together, and a line of lanterns about fifty yards in front of the lines, at intervals of about fifty yards or so, and no native could have come within the zone of light without

being seen. No precautions were taken to cut scrub to make a zareba in front of the positions, and it was often long before dark before the incoming soldiers got into their camp, perhaps tired from carrying luggage, and lulled into security by seeing their neighbours no better off than they were. There were very few natives killed at night-time, and, with the exception of some that were killed at the attack on the ordnance camp, only two others were bagged, and those both by the Indians, who had evidently more experience than Tommy Atkins of what natives are capable of. It is no use attempting to disguise it, that the young Tommy Atkins is not so wide awake as the old stager used to be who had passed all his life in soldiering, and had campaigned in India, the Cape, and New Zealand. Young Tommy is all adrift in bush-fighting and Soudan work. He is all right at a stand-up fight in the open, but he is at a great disadvantage in a thick country of which he has firstly no experience, and secondly, perhaps, has never been out of the streets of London or some parade ground. The country bumpkin will lose himself in the streets of London; a Londoner in the country is generally lost, as he has no eye for locality, and cannot tell, if the sun is not shining, east from west, or north from south. What was most marked was the difference of organization between England and Bombay on board the transports. Every detail of the force that arrived from India was nearly perfect. Each transport that came in had everything complete on board, and it is not saying too much for the system employed that the troops that came in each transport could have taken the field and gone into action a couple of hours after arrival, with commissariat, transport, medical staff, and everything complete.

The whole force sent from India was in fact deserving of

every praise, and any casual observer must have seen how very far ahead they are in organization to the English home authorities, and how every department immediately fell into its allotted place without any noise and confusion. The transports were cleaner, better ventilated, and better organized than those from England, and any foreign nation would have been able to learn many things, and taken useful hints from the management of the force that arrived from India. I had several conversations with Italian officers on the subject, and they were loud in their praise at the organization and equipment of the Eastern transports. I have not before me now a list of the transports that were in Suakim Harbour at the same time. The greatest number of steamers and sailing ships anchored at one time was forty-eight, and among others the following Companies were all represented:—National Line, Peninsular and Oriental, British India, Monarch Line, Clan Line, Union Line, Orient Line, Asiatic Steam, Wilson Line, besides many other smaller Companies, the Indian troopships, and some seven or eight English men-of-war.

All these steamers were berthed and taken out of the harbour without accident, and it only goes to prove that Suakim might be made a first-class harbour for commercial purposes, and capable of holding steamers ample for all its commercial wants, and as the ultimate depôt for the whole trade of the Soudan and Northern Central Africa. The approaches to the harbour from the east and south are bad, but from the north if a screw-pile lighthouse was placed on Sangeneb reef, about forty miles to the north, there would be no danger to shipping, and the deviation from the south to Sangeneb reef would not be great. The only transport that was lost in 1884 was the *Neera*, and then there was no good chart or survey of the eastern approaches to Suakim.

Had she been supplied with a good chart there is no doubt the accident would not have taken place.

What a motley assemblage the followers of the army were, and especially those that had to look out after the camels, which were drawn from many countries and districts, and what an enormous item in the cost of the expedition the camels alone came to. It was not only their first cost, but their transport that also added to it, and what a "scratch" lot they were in more senses than one. There were camels from all parts of India, Aden, Somali country, Arabia, Syria, and Egypt, camel men from all these countries as well, Abyssinia, and the Soudan. Had any trouble been taken to get the camels from the Soudan in the preceding autumn there is no doubt that many of the tribes would have found their way to the coast, and not only have been too glad to sell their animals, but have taken service under the English.

It was only in early January that the authorities in England and Cairo began looking about for camels from the environs of Suakim, and then the advice of those that knew the country was not listened to, and opinions of natives who only knew and lived in Suakim were taken. There was no appeal made to King John to allow camels to come through his country, and any English officer or official that had opened a market at Sanheit for the Beni Amer, Hamram, and other tribes would soon have been able to purchase any quantity of good animals, and there is no doubt that the Shukeriyeh tribe and those from the Taka districts would all have driven up their animals for sale, and a proper class of beast—hardy, tough, and enduring—would have been got hold of, suited for Soudan work, which the Egyptian and Syrian beasts were not.



By sending an officer to Chelga and getting into communication with Sheik Saleh Bey, of Gallabat, more camels could also have been procured, and by the mere fact of the English being in the market to make purchases would have put all the tribes against Mahdism, and Mahomed Achmed would not have been able to have got his followers round Khartoum in the numbers he did, as he would have been threatened from all points. There seems to have been a sad lack of intelligence all round, and no one capable of grasping the situation in the masterly manner it ought to have been. The most foolish part was allowing King John's friendly overtures to have gone for nought. He has an unlimited number of his subjects who like nothing better than fighting dervishes, and with a good adviser being sent him, and his joining with the surrounding friendly tribes on his frontier, they would soon have driven Mahdism away from the Eastern Soudan. What I now write about was not an impossibility, as both King John and the sheiks of the frontier were willing to come to terms, and there is no doubt that an immediate *modus vivendi* could have been brought about, and it would have been the commencement of better times, and a happier and more certain future to both, as it has only been Egyptian intrigues that have kept up the unhappy state of affairs on the frontier. My experience leads me to believe that it is possible to make the two people live in peace. Neither the peasants of Abyssinia nor the inhabitants of the plains wish to quarrel, as they have everything to lose and nothing to gain by doing so, and that the Christianity of one nor the fanaticism of the other is so highly advanced that they quarrel on religious principles. It was a great pity that nothing was done—anything would have been better than absolutely sitting still—but, like other things, it was mismanaged, and all the

blunders that could be thought of were perpetrated, and what ought to have been done was not done.

I suppose it was red tape, and some instructions that were dug out of a musty pigeon hole, that put all the camels, no matter where they came from, on the same footing, and that all the animals had to be watered once a day. It was a regular case of one man can take a horse to the water, but ten cannot make him drink. What we accustom our beasts to in the Soudan is to go without water for at least two days, if not three, in summer time, and I should not care to be bothered with a camel in the Soudan in the cool season that wanted to drink more than once in three days. Many animals go without water for five and six days, and it is a common thing for camels to make their 100 miles without tasting water. The food given them was also wrong, and what with tibbin, or chopped straw and beans, they soon got out of condition, and really could not get through an honest day's work. The hours that were taken up daily in sending them to the water and back might very well have been spent in the camel lines. No long food was given them, and as the camel is an animal that chews the cud, and should be allowed so many hours a day rest in which he can masticate his food properly, he had nothing to bring up from his stomach to his mouth except a mass of beans and short straw, heated to the animal's bodily warmth, which was returned again to the stomach like pap. With long dhurra stalks, hay, or straw it is different; these it can swallow and return to the mouth at leisure, when there is some enjoyment, and the food takes longer to digest. The same with dhurra grain, as it takes a lot of chewing, and can be returned several times before it finally passes, and it possesses many advantages over crushed beans, which ought only to

be given in moderation. The consequence of the wrong system of feeding was the animals got too fat, developed fat on the humps, which a Soudani always guards against in a working camel; then the saddles did not fit, and the hump being soft galls were easily set up, and they proved very hard to cure.

The Indian camels were by far better looked out after and kept than those belonging to the English contingent; and the officers belonging to the Indian transport corps seemed thoroughly to understand their work, which those belonging to the English transport did not, perhaps because they never had camels to look out after before. There is no doubt that the camel in inexperienced hands is the biggest brute in creation, and he seems to have a dislike to a white face. Still, he has his good points, and for endurance and rough work is not to be equalled. However, some people think that he can live on sand, wants no looking out after, and can carry an unlimited amount of weight day and night without rest. The Soudan native seems to understand the camel as well as anyone else, and the thousands of tons of cargo I have seen brought in and sent away from Suakim per annum gives me some little right to speak on the matter. It was only in the hottest of seasons, and when there was very little food *en route*, that the camels seemed to break down, and then because forced marches were made. There were a great many more break-downs from Cassala than from Berber, owing to the longer distances between water, and the less food *en route*. The animals then used to have to make perhaps three "shids" per day for three or four days running. A "shid" is the time taken from the time a camel is loaded till the time it is unloaded, including the march, and they average just about six hours. The camelmen are most

particular, as a rule, that they never make on a long distance more than twelve "shids" per week, and in the hot weather never think about travelling in the heat of the day; their animals are then generally found under the shade of some thorn tree, chewing the cud. During the expedition the camels were often worked from long before daylight till sunset without rest, and with their saddles on the whole time, making it impossible for the poor beasts to roll in the sand and clean themselves, and at night they were tied up on foul ground unsuited to them. I don't say their lines were not cleaned and swept, but the ground underneath got foul, and the sand was soon brushed away, and their bodies were then resting on the hard soil, underneath which is also impregnated to a great extent with salt. As soon as mange broke out it rapidly spread, and there can be no doubt that the red and common mange that at last got so common was imported from Suez. There was one ship load of camels that came down that was full of red mange; the animals were not allowed to land at Suakim, refused at Suez, so they found their way into the Red Sea, food for the sharks and fishes, an expensive lot of animals that John Bull had to pay for. It must have showed gross carelessness on behalf of the people who purchased and shipped the camels, and it seemed as if everything that had four legs, a head, and a hump was purchased in Egypt, and sent off to the Soudan. Some of the camels were old patriarchs, who had evidently worked hard and joined in the forced labour used for commencing the Suez Canal. Their tushes were long and large, the hollows over their eyes roomy and deep, and would have held a good handful of grain, and it was very evident that they could not go very far, or last very long. They might easily have been left to end their days in peace in their own country,

instead of finding an uncomfortable grave in the Soudan desert, or being food for vultures and crows.

The water transport question was, of course, the most important item to be taken into consideration in a country where it can only be procured underground, and when it takes some little time to organize a proper system of wells. This, of course, means that a great deal has to be carried with the troops when they first march, and not only for themselves, but for the animals accompanying the force, and the more cavalry taken the more water there is required. Had the force of camels employed in the water transports been animals picked for their not wanting water oftener than once in three days there would have been much valuable time saved. I don't know that the water transport force was worse than any of the others; it certainly was not better, and left much to be desired. There was a great loss of time in filling the water-tins, and a great deal of waste, which might have been remedied and prevented; at one time there was not enough water-tins for the force, and on looking for them among the ships in the harbour they were found to be still on their voyage out from England. Luckily the commissariat were able to buy some large water-skins at Suakim, or the force that marched out would have had to have gone without or remained at home. With a proper lot of camels, and a few drivers with a little more intelligence than the animals they take care of, and with the smallest amount of common sense, the water transport ought to have been the easiest of things to accomplish. With a little more piping and a few more tanks the work would have been quicker done; and the class of water-tins used by the army are very inferior, as they take a long time to fill, so much water is wasted in emptying them, and I heard them being

abused by everyone, also the man who invented them, and those that sent them out. They are handy enough, and a camel can easily carry four, and that is all to be said in their favour. It is to be hoped that a new design will soon be invented, and used on the next campaign, fitted with a tap, by which the soldiers' water-bottles can be filled without waste, and that it is possible to fill a glass with water without spilling two on the ground. The camel saddles used are also very inferior and heavy, and not a bit of an improvement on those used by the natives, which are light and serviceable. I should say that they might easily be reduced in weight at least ten per cent., and when some thousands of camels are being used this item of weight saved alone is worth considering. The nets used on the camel saddles are useful, but they could be greatly improved, and could be fastened in a different manner. The nets can contain all sorts of odds and ends, pots and pans, &c., and they are easily put in and taken out, and it is easy to keep the weight each side properly balanced. The whole of the English campaigning gear might easily be improved, and more system adopted, which is now entirely absent. Cylinder-shaped tins might be employed for carrying water, say of two sizes, to carry one hundred pounds and two hundred pounds of water—the smaller for mule transport, the larger for camels. This would give twelve mules or six camels for each ton of water, allowing in the hottest of weather six tons of water per regiment per diem, which would be a large and liberal allowance. It would want seventy-two mules or thirty-six camels per regiment; camels are the cheaper, and take less trouble to manage, want water less often, and could go for seventy-two hours without drinking at a push. I advocate cylinder-shaped tins, as they can be

rolled about, and when a camel is being loaded it is easier to roll the tin into position than to lift it. Then a cylinder has no sharp edges, and sits on the saddle just as well as the ordinary shaped tins; they should be attached to the saddles with short, light chains, as they last longer than straps, which with their buckles are always a trouble, and a strap stands a greater chance of being stolen than a chain. All boxes should have their edges and corners rounded off with a spokeshave, as many an animal is badly wounded and hurt on the march by one running into the other, and I saw a good many animals with nasty cuts and broken bruises simply occasioned by a sharp corner of a box or package. In a small way when I travel I have a different coloured box for each class of article, and it saves me very much trouble, as I can lay my hands on any article I want at once. I do not see why the Government should not adopt the same plan—say white boxes for biscuits, red for preserved meats, blue for tea, yellow for coffee, green for sugar, and so on; there is nothing like simplifying things and saving trouble, and the regiments that had to draw their rations would immediately know where to go for the things they required. How many times have I seen during the 1884 and 1885 campaigns the commissariat people themselves adrift and hunting for a box containing something they required at once, and they did not know the contents till they turned the boxes over to read what they contained. I have often heard one commissariat man say to another, “I say, Bill, do you know if there is any more tea or coffee up?” as the case may be, while if the boxes were of different colours they could be distinguished a hundred yards off, and as soon as the transport animals came into camp the goods could be classified at once and kept together. As it is now

one sees biscuits on the top of sugar, tea mixed up with tinned meats, preserved soups here, coffee there, and all in confusion. Natives know colours, but they cannot read or write, and if they were told to put down the yellow boxes in one place, the white in another, they would do so, and there would be more regularity and order. When we send a caravan of merchandise up country, we have different marks and colours to distinguish the different contents of each package, which are always put together every evening, and the man in charge can count the number of loads of each class of goods and see that they are right. If a camel strays or is missing with his load it is at once known what is short and its description, and I defy any commissariat officer to tell you at the end of the day, unless he takes an enormous amount of trouble, what has come into camp of each description of goods, and if he has two or four or six camel loads missing, and if a camel load is missing, what has gone astray. With the system we adopt we could do so at once, and tell exactly what he has got in stock. What we can do they can do, and we with our hundreds of camels and only one person in charge can be copied by many people in charge of the thousands of camels employed by a large force. If a merchant or company on a large scale did work like the Government they would be ruined in a season, and we should offer a premium for our servants to rob us, and not half our things would ever get to their destination. The Indian commissariat, as far as organization is concerned, is far superior to the English, but still they improve and get near perfection after campaigning for a few days, while ours does not seem to get much better or worse. The Indian tent equipage is also far superior to our own, the ventilation is better, and their double tents, both small and large, are



very comfortable. The colours with which the tents are lined give a great deal of relief to the eye, and the dark maroon colour with which the inner side of the outer covering is lined entirely shuts out the sun's rays; the inner covering, with its light yellow lining, also neutralizes the light, and one can sit in an Indian tent with one's hat off without the least fear of sunstroke, and the subdued light gives a great relief, and one fancies it is cooler than it really is. An English double tent is little better than a furnace, and there is always an oppressive feeling in it. The only thing that can be said for an English tent is it is better than an Egyptian one, but just opposite to what an Indian one is, viz., comparatively cool in hot weather and warm in cold. It was a pity during the campaign that carts were not made more use of, as they would have saved many camels; everywhere in the plains they can go with ease, and there are no obstacles in the way of wheeled traffic on the roads to Roweyah, Berber, Cassala, or Tokar, and I am told by people who have been there it is nothing like such a bad country as either Australia or the Cape, where carts, waggon, and drays are most extensively used. The carts would always do to laager and form part of a zareba, and I should have felt much safer on the night of the 12th March, 1884, if I had had a cart between me and the enemy, instead of a very flimsy thorn hedge which any ordinary Arab could have hopped over. Whenever I think of that night I feel as if I should like to tell my beads as the Mahommedans do, and say "God is merciful." I never could understand why a lot of the barbed wire fencing was not sent out to the Soudan to be used combined with the zareba as a means of defence at night. If a kind had been manufactured with the barbs slightly longer than that used at home, so as to

inflict an ugly wound, it would have been most useful to have momentarily checked the rush of the dervishes when an annihilating volley could have been poured into them at close quarters. There would have been very little difficulty in fixing it, as it might have been lain on the top of the bushes composing the zareba, or put up at a height of about two to three feet just in front of the bushes. It would have effectually tripped up and wounded the enemy in the excitement of the moment of charging. Iron spikes or crows' feet were used by Baker's force, and I saw a native tread on one of them by accident and it went right home to the ball in the sole of his foot, and he was immediately *hors de combat* and lame for a long time afterwards.

The details of the fighting I do not intend to follow; its object was to break Osman Digna's powers, which it succeeded in doing to a certain extent, and it made him go further away from Suakim, whither it was impossible for the English troops to follow him. The first engagement was at Hasheem, about seven miles west of our camp, and I never could see what object there was in trying to occupy the hills near these water holes as they did not command the water, and it is only a small morning's walk for a native to come to Hasheem from Tamaai. If the water at Hasheem had been occupied, and at the same time that at Handub, and have gone on constructing the railway, it would have been different, as all the enemy would then have had to come from Tamaai to have given us battle, and as they would have certainly been beaten if they had done so the mounted corps would have had a chance of following up a demoralized and beaten force. If the intention was to have given battle to Osman Digna at once it would have been better to have repeated what was done in 1884, and make for Tamaai

first, fight the battle, destroy his stores of food, and then returned to Suakim to make the railway. Osman Digna was not in full force at Hasheem. The ground is most difficult, and the bush very thick; the most favourable country in which the natives could have fought in, and the most awkward for our troops.

As usual, we went for the place like a bulldog goes in at a bull, instead of going towards Aderob, which would have been cutting them off from Tamaai, then making for Hasheem, through a comparatively open and easy country, which would have given our men some chance of keeping a proper formation, and using their rifles at a long distance when the attack takes place, which means that the dervishes stand no chance, and the lives lost on our side are comparatively few. Everyone spoke most highly of the conduct of our men and officers during this most trying day's operations. Had the enemy known how to use their rifles properly every shot would have told on our dense formation, which simply crawled along through the bush, and the Guards' Brigade must have suffered terribly. It is hard to say what the enemy lost on this occasion, but it must have been over 600 considerably, taking the number of skeletons that are strewn about the bushes; in one place, where, I believe, the cavalry got at them in the open ground towards Aderob, there are at least 200 skeletons in a comparatively short distance.

The troops returned in the afternoon after a most fatiguing and trying day, there being a simoon and sandstorm blowing at Suakim nearly the whole morning. I went out to the Marine camp to see who was left behind, and I found one of the junior lieutenants left in command who had been at Suakim the whole summer, and he thought he had been

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The details of the fighting I do not intend to follow ; its object was to break Osman Digna's powers, which it succeeded in doing to a certain extent, and it made him go further away from Suakim, whither it was impossible for the English troops to follow him. The first engagement was at Hasheem, about seven miles west of our camp, and I never could see what object there was in trying to occupy the hills near these water holes as they did not command the water, and it is only a small morning's walk for a native to come to Hasheem from Tamaai. If the water at Hasheem had been occupied, and at the same time that at Handub, and have gone on constructing the railway, it would have been different, as all the enemy would then have had to come from Tamaai to have given us battle, and as they would have certainly been beaten if they had done so the mounted corps would have had a chance of following up a demoralized and beaten force. If the intention was to have given battle to Osman Digna at once it would have been better to have repeated what was done in 1884, and make for Tamaai



first, fight the battle, destroy his stores of food, and then returned to Suakim to make the railway. Osman Digna was not in full force at Hasheem. The ground is most difficult, and the bush very thick; the most favourable country in which the natives could have fought in, and the most awkward for our troops.

As usual, we went for the place like a bulldog goes in at a bull, instead of going towards Aderob, which would have been cutting them off from Tamaai, then making for Hasheem, through a comparatively open and easy country, which would have given our men some chance of keeping a proper formation, and using their rifles at a long distance when the attack takes place, which means that the dervishes stand no chance, and the lives lost on our side are comparatively few. Everyone spoke most highly of the conduct of our men and officers during this most trying day's operations. Had the enemy known how to use their rifles properly every shot would have told on our dense formation, which simply crawled along through the bush, and the Guards' Brigade must have suffered terribly. It is hard to say what the enemy lost on this occasion, but it must have been over 600 considerably, taking the number of skeletons that are strewn about the bushes; in one place, where, I believe, the cavalry got at them in the open ground towards Aderob, there are at least 200 skeletons in a comparatively short distance.

The troops returned in the afternoon after a most fatiguing and trying day, there being a simoon and sandstorm blowing at Suakim nearly the whole morning. I went out to the Marine camp to see who was left behind, and I found one of the junior lieutenants left in command who had been at Suakim the whole summer, and he thought he had been

very hardly treated that he had not been allowed to take part in the day's fighting, and he could nearly cry with vexation. I sympathized with him, and told him he would have lots more chances of being killed, and as it turned out the first time he did go out on convoy duty to Tofrick he was hit in the head by a spent ball and knocked over, but not very badly wounded. Lieutenant Lalor got well chaffed by his seniors about his wound. The ball luckily had to go through his helmet and puggaree, or it might have been much worse for him. The Surrey Regiment was left zarebaed on two hills that form an outlying spur and run out into the plain for a little way. And there they were, an object, no doubt, of curiosity to the natives, who thought of what use they were in their exalted position.

Before the advance to Tamaai was made the spies informed the Intelligence Department that it was Osman Digna's intention to make the next attack on the English when they were in confusion making the zareba, and how true their information turned out to be was proved by the terrible Sunday's fight on the 22nd of March at Tofrick. The old road by which we went out to Tamaai in 1884 was not used for this advance. It seemed a pity to abandon it for a new and untried one through the bush; every detail of the surroundings of the country round the old road was known, and there was absolutely no thick bush to impede the quick advance of troops and convoys, and few trees that the baggage and packages of the transport camels could catch in to disturb their loads. The new route chosen was in a bee-line from the left of the left water fort at Sharter wells to the Tesilah hills, and led through thick bush the majority of the way. It might have been from two to three miles shorter than the old one, but what was gained in actual dis-

tance was more than lost by the description of the country one had to go through.

The Berkshire Regiment and Marines with a Naval Brigade were to be left out about half-way to Tesilah to form a zareba, so as to store water and provisions for the final march on Tamaai and Tamanieb, the headquarters of the dervishes. The Indian Brigade went out with the transport, and they all got away about daylight on Sunday morning, 22nd March. Everything seems to have got on all right till they halted to make their zareba, and when it was about half finished the attack took place. The commissariat and transport animals had just finished discharging their loads, and were forming up to march back to Suakim, which is plainly to be seen from Tofrick. The spies were exact in their information to the minutest detail, and all their warnings seemed to have been set aside and treated as nothing.

The result of the fight and what took place is too well known to be recapitulated here, suffice it to say, if any force was ever surprised our troops were on that Sunday afternoon. The information was given that the enemy was in sight—the troops were eating their food and cutting bushwood to make the zareba—about two minutes afterwards, and long before the troops could be got together, scouts, outposts, and dervishes appeared on the scene, to the surprise of everyone. And then commenced a perfect free fight, without any order or formation: Berkshire Regiment all split up in one part of the ground, Marines in another part, Naval Brigade all separated, Engineers somewhere else, Indian Brigade separated from the English Division, commissariat partly between the two, and everything in such confusion, like a child's box of toys thrown on the ground from an open window. How did it take place? By ignoring the Intelli-

gence Department, and going through thick bush when they could have gone in the open. The scouts had no time to get in through the thick bush much quicker than what the dervishes came on at; they only just kept ahead of them and that is all, and, of course, had no time to give the necessary alarm. Another five minutes would have made a great deal of difference. The Surrey Regiment heliographed to the zereba to say the enemy was surrounding them. How did they get out of it? Simply through the pluck and steadiness of our officers and troops.

Another example of our troops saving their Generals when they had been led into danger. Tommy Atkins may fail his Generals some day when asked to do something impossible, and then there will be a row. I saw quite enough of the panic-stricken camp followers and non-combatants on their arrival at Suakim, after a six-mile run, to have imagined the confusion and uproar on the field of battle. The attack by the dervishes was delivered simultaneously; from all sides they surrounded the transport animals and camp followers, and tried to drive them over the unformed regiments, in which they partially succeeded, and it was only by shooting down animals, camp followers, and dervishes indiscriminately that saved the soldiers. I don't suppose there ever will be a return published of the numbers of animals and camp followers lost that day, and perhaps it is better that the world should not know the number. The fighting commenced at nearly three o'clock, and was over in about half an hour, and it was particularly exciting hearing the continuous clatter of musketry getting gradually fainter; and what with the number of fugitives coming in, riderless horses rushing down to the sea, mules with their saddles all adrift, and many wounded stray camels here, there, and

everywhere, some with one camp follower on their back, some with two, it looked as if our force had been wiped out, and those that were coming in the ones that had got away. The Guards' Brigade were immediately got under arms, and formed up on the open ridges to the north of the Sharter wells. The Indian cavalry were posted in advance, and the Horse Artillery on the extreme right, nearest the hills. I rode out on my camel, which was luckily saddled, and got to the wells just as the Guards were forming up. I was immediately asked by General Graham to find out from the Arabs that were coming in their version of what had taken place, as all the staff officers were trying to get information from the fugitives, who each had a different tale, and were all certain that they were the only survivors of the force, and they could not say more than they had been attacked, cut off from the combatant troops, and then had bolted to Suakim as hard as they could. I soon saw Mahomed Ali's young son, who goes by the name of the "Admiral," as he had made sundry successful raids on the enemy along the coast, having left with his men in dhows. He was riding in at a great pace, and certainly would have run great risk of being shot by some of the excited fugitives had they not been too busy trying to save themselves, and wanted to attack no one till they had to defend themselves. The "Admiral," as soon as he recognized me some way off, came as hard as his camel could for me, and the first thing he said was : "Thank God I am safe with you ; everyone has been mistaking me for an enemy." I heard from him a full account of the fight, the surprise, the panic, the repulse, and then order restored, and by the time we had trotted up to General Graham I could give a pretty correct story from a native's point of view of what had taken place. I went with the "Admiral" and

showed him where he and four or five of his men where to go scouting, and then returned to the Guards' square, where I felt much safer than going through the bush unarmed, as I particularly object to scouting unless I have two or three good shots with me that I can rely on. We crawled out, as the nature of the country entirely prevents quick progress in square formation, and as soon as we got in signalling distance of the zareba heard that no help was required, and that the wounded would be sent in next morning. I saw a few dead transport animals and camp followers, but did not visit the place of slaughter, which from all accounts was awful.

We returned to camp, and as soon as the order was given to retire I went off as hard as my camel could trot to Suakim to see what news there was there. There were a lot of anxious people waiting for news, and the most wild rumours were afoot as to the disaster. The panic soon subsided, and luckily a quiet night followed, the Arabs evidently having had a pretty good mauling, as they did not disturb the camp. The next few days were spent in taking water and provisions of all sorts to the zareba, and twice the force going out was attacked by the plucky Arabs between the wells and the zareba with more or less casualties to the troops guarding the convoys.

The smell from the dead animals and Arabs near the zareba was something too horrible, and there were too many of them to bury, so they had to be burnt. The life that those led in the zareba must have been far from a pleasant one, and I am very glad I had no business that would take me that way, as I have seen quite enough horrors during the last few months to satisfy most people, and this battle-field was perfectly unique as regards horrors; never has there been, perhaps, a fight in which so many types of human

beings were represented—Indians, Hindoo, and Mahommedan from all parts; Hadramut Arabs, representatives from the tribes round Aden; Somalis, Egyptians, Syrians, Greeks, Maltese, Englishmen, Madras Christians, Abyssinians, Hadendowies, Beni-Amers, Amarars, and all the sub-tribes of the Eastern Soudan had been killed that Sunday afternoon. Many acts of personal gallantry were performed, and the troops had greatly distinguished themselves as a body. The Sikhs had met the Arab warriors with the bayonet and fired very few shots on account of not wishing to shoot down friends. The Bombay regiment behaved well, and the loyal Poorbeahs had no chance of doing much, as the transport and commissariat animals were driven over them. The Berkshire and Marines fought like only Englishmen can fight when put to great straits, and the Arabs learnt another lesson that they had no chance against Englishmen whatever they might have against the Turks, Egyptians, and other troops they had met in the Soudan.

I was glad to see my friend the Honble. Guy Dawnay back from the zareba safe and sound. He has had a lot of experience of the country, and I think, without exception, is the best sportsman that has ever been in the Soudan, and one of the coolest big game shots there is. His being able to stand the charge of dangerous animals and back himself in single combat against a wild beast stood him in good stead on this occasion, and there is no doubt he saved the lives of several of our men and officers who, when they were being attacked by two or more Arabs, he quickly dropped their assailants one after another. Four hundred game shots like Dawnay, armed with magazine rifles, could walk through Africa, as no Arabs could get close to them as long as they kept in the open. It is a pretty sight seeing

a good shot at game at work, and what awe the Arabs stand in of a first-class rifle shot. The sportsman has had more to do in winning our battles for us than anyone else, and what would have become of India unless our officers, military and civilian, had been inured to field sports and ready at any moment to take the opportunity when it offered of going out to kill a man-eating tiger, a rogue elephant, or any other dangerous beast. I would have liked to have had the raising of about 500 men from Abyssinia from among the elephant hunters in that country, and had them in this Eastern Soudan campaign, about 50 Hamram Sword Hunters, that tackle the elephant and all the big game, as cavalry to be in front as scouts, and I believe I could have purged the Eastern Soudan of all dervishes in a few months. Certainly they could be got together, and when once organized they would be the terror of all the tribes, and it would be impossible for any rising that the Arabs got up to have lasted for any length of time. A force of this description would have done as much good as an English brigade, and its cost would have been a mere nothing.

There was great excitement when the Australian contingent arrived, and everyone seemed very sorry that they had arrived too late for any of the severe fighting, as there could be no doubt from what the spies said that the Arabs were thoroughly demoralized, and that Osman Digna was left with a very small force, nothing that he ever could do any great harm with. The steamers that brought the Australians when entering the harbour were greatly cheered by everyone, and everyone that could get away turned out to see them land. The soldiers that composed the force were fine stalwart men, with a certain amount of "grit" about them which the majority of our young troops lacked. They



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looked hard enough and strong enough to go anywhere or do anything, and there is no doubt that with a little more experience they would be as fine a body of men as could be found in the world, thoroughly worthy to uphold the honour of old England in any part of her dominions, or on the Continent if need be. There can be no doubt that England's resources are scattered, but for real staying stamina she possesses the right stuff if it was properly organized, which it is not. As long as there are two parties in the State always quarrelling, that the attention of the public will always be divided, and that they will never consider the question of organizing our national defences in the proper manner, and see how imperative it is for us that we should always be prepared. Our army and navy should be a national one, not a Liberal or a Conservative one, which ever party is in office. One Government says, "See what I have saved in expenditure compared to what the last one did." What the public should insist on knowing is whether the money saved has not been money saved by impairing the working of the army and navy, and have we got the best articles that money can produce, are we efficient, have we the men and the material to go to war with. Australia has sent us about a thousand of her children to help us in a great time of need. We ought to be thankful for her doing so; she might send us some day 50,000 if we wanted them. Do we help Australia with officers and counsel to organize, and may not some day we have to send her 50,000 men? Has she everything organized? It is impossible for the public to know what we possess in the different arsenals, but it is most certain that we possess not half what we ought to have, and that our commissariat and transport service is about as bad as it can be, not that the officers

individually are in fault, but that our system is rotten. After the thrashing that is due to us takes place we may wake up and be wiser, and then the management of the army and navy may be better. It seems a great pity that we cannot have two armies and navies, a Liberal one and a Conservative one, only to serve when their respective Governments are in power. It is about as sensible as the present system. The curses of our colonists against the mother country will not help matters when one of them gets taken by a foreign power, and, as I said before, it is no use saying, "I told you so; everyone knew we were not prepared." Our next door neighbour's lesson ought to have been taken at heart, but it seems to have been forgotten. Let us by all means have our small army perfect, and let the army and navy manage themselves more than they do now, and we shall perhaps get nearer perfection.

The Australian contingent were brigaded with the Guards and made honorary members of all the messes, a pretty compliment which they greatly appreciated, and the whole time that the Australians were at Suakim the friendship between the representatives of the mother country and her brave colony was most marked, and on parting no doubt there were most pleasant memories left behind of the first campaign in which the joint forces took part. The Australians had, I am afraid, most monotonous work to perform, a series of making and breaking camps, and the march out to Tamaai *via* Tofrick and Teselah, where the final zareba was made before marching on Osman Digna's headquarters. The encampment was between the two Teselah hills, about half a mile from the zareba, where we slept on the nights of the 13th and 14th of March, 1884, and although it was a much stronger position than the former one, it was in no way

better for attacking the Arabs than at Tamanieb or Tamaai. The night was passed with a few occasional shots being fired, and next day the Arabs were seen on the broken ground near the Khor. They amused themselves by taking long shots at the mounted men scouting and the square, but there was no fight left in them, and the march out was of absolutely no effect, as all the ammunition and stores had been taken up to Erkoweet long before the arrival of the troops. If it had been possible to have gone on from Tofrick the day after the fight, say, on the 23rd, the Arabs might have again stood, but now it was again too late, and only another proof that English troops are useless for Soudan fighting, owing to their slow movements, and until Tommy Atkins learns to follow them on camel-back there is not much chance of being able to do anything with the Arabs. A return was made to Suakim; the camp was again formed, and the railway was got on with. The first place that was occupied nearly was Khor Hasheem, that runs across the road to Handub, about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles out, and the railway was progressed with at a slow rate. The constructing party was protected by covering parties of troops, and weary work it must have been for them all, day long in the sun with nothing to do but to try and keep themselves cool. As soon as the scrub was reached the hard work of scrub cutting had to be done, and a broad belt each side of the railway cleared, and the bushes piled up on each side, zareba fashion. Then Handub was occupied, and then the everlasting daily convoys had to go out. The two hills at Handub on each side of the water-course were occupied and fortified, the camp made on the further side of the hills, and when the railroad got nearer Handub, Otoa was occupied about ten miles further on with a post on the isolated hills which

springs out of the plain near the entrance to Otoa valley. This post was called Blue Bottle Hill. The officers of the regiments that first occupied Handub got very good shooting, a few bustard, a good many gazelle, and hares, and hundreds of quail, doves, and sand-grouse were shot, which made a nice change from the everlasting ration beef. Those officers that had guns were lucky, and the cartridges were much sought after, and I gave away nearly all mine to them. The Arabs were very seldom seen, and one might imagine the incessant popping of guns that used to take place morning and evening that a small engagement was going on. The Arabs soon began coming into Handub and Otoa, and bringing in sheep and goats for sale, and it was not long before the luxury of fresh milk could be procured. All the Arabs declared that they had been with Osman Digna through fear, and had not fought against the English. They no doubt had all been at one time at Tamaai, had then withdrawn to their hills, and when they saw the chance of turning an honest penny, profited by the occasion for doing so. Poor fellows, I pity them, as we have behaved very badly to them, and have done nothing to try and get them together, tell them what we intended to do, or given them good advice, which after all in our case are mere empty words. There were several occasions on which long shots were fired into the Otoa camp, which was commanded by the hills on the south of the valley, but after a redoubt was put up and some men from the Guards volunteered to go out and wait for the party of Arabs that came to fire, they soon went away, and hereafter there was no more bother. As soon as the Arabs saw Tambuck occupied they gave up all idea of bothering, and my native friends outside really believed that the railway was going to be

made, and that the Soudan was going to be taken by the English. The news of the railway and its engines that could go faster than the quickest horses and camels could gallop had a wonderfully quieting effect, and when the news spread that the English used to go from Suakim to Handub in half an hour, and that the carriages they went in could carry at the same time more than five hundred camels could, many of the Arabs came to see this devil's contrivance, and when they found that the English did not want to molest them and did not imprison them, but bought their cattle at a price never heard of before and offered them work, it had a most quieting effect. In a short time I saw it was perfectly safe to ride from Suakim to Tambuck along the road, and even by the short cut, and I used often to go out only accompanied by my servant, and never came across an unfriendly Arab, although I saw many, and some of them with just a small piece of red or blue cloth remaining on their clothes, a sure sign that they had once been in the enemy's camp. There was one reconnaissance in force made to the south of the position at Otoa across the hills towards Khor Abent, which leads up to Singat, for the purpose of breaking up a force of the enemy, under Mahd Adam Sodoun, who had a good many people with him and large flocks of cattle, which they thought were perfectly safe where they were. I did not accompany the different columns that were sent out. The force employed was a mixed one, and was drawn from the Indian, English, and Australian contingents. It is about the only time the camel corps formed at Suakim were used, and very good work they did. In the afternoon, being at headquarter camp to lunch, I rode out by myself to see them coming back, and on getting near Hasheem could see the dust from the force moving some way on ahead. I

was keeping my eyes open, as I was going some pace, my camel being fresh, when I pulled up all of a sudden, and to my surprise saw a lot of natives running about to my half-left, from Tamaai towards the dust. I had a look from behind a bush and I saw a short, sharp scrimmage and the natives return towards Tamaai, driving a lot of sheep and goats in front of them, and soon after I saw a few of the Bengal cavalry coming towards me. I made towards Hasheem Hill, and soon saw our mounted corps coming back. It appears that the Arabs had made an attack on the party that were driving in some of the cattle captured, and as the guard were greatly outnumbered they had to make off, leaving the animals to the Arabs. Had the sheep been driven nearer the main force this could not have happened, but they were bringing them back happy-go-lucky style, not thinking that they would be attacked.

The Australians thought that there was a good chance of finding minerals in the country, and there were several excursions made in the hills round Otoa and Tambuck, and traces of copper were found a little further on than Tambuck, and many signs of mineral wealth. I only wish they had had the chance of seeing more of the country, especially the Erkoweet mountains and those further north, where there are many traces of quartz. Really nothing is known of the Eastern Soudan, and it has never been scientifically surveyed or gone over, and the people who have travelled through it can be counted on the fingers of the hand. No one has ever crossed the country to the south-west to the Atbara, no one to the north-west to Abou Hammed on the Nile, no one has ridden along the native road which is said to exist into Egypt and Keneh, and no one knows anything of the northern slave routes. We all know that there is plenty of

vegetation on the Erkoweet mountains, and plenty of running water, and if there why not on all the mountains to the north of Suakim as far as the Elba mountains, many of which are much higher than those round Erkoweet. They all have the same rainfall. The geological formation is likely to be the same as at Erkoweet, and the indications of minerals found by the Australians lead one to believe that some day when the country is properly explored discoveries of valuable metals may be made. We know that there is plenty of gold found in the washings in Abyssinia, and that the inhabitants know nothing about mining and quartz crushing, and it is to be inferred that where gold is found in alluvial washing there gold-producing rock must also be, and if it pays to work the one it would pay to work the other. The gold in Abyssinia is all found in river beds that run from the mountains, and in close proximity to the highlands. From the northern mountains round Elba and Erba I have seen plenty of specimens of marbles and alabaster; porphyry is common—green, red, and black. The green marble is very pretty, and I have seen several very handsome pipeheads made of it.

As soon as the heat commenced there was a great reduction in the energy displayed, and we could soon see that it was going to be another abortive campaign. No one seemed to know what was going to be done, and what is more, no one seemed to care; it was evident that most of the troops would soon be recalled, and there would be no chastising of the Mahdi or crushing him, and there was absolutely no attempt made to get King John to act in concert with his neighbouring allies against the dervishes. All idea of going on with either railway or campaign was set at rest as soon as Lord Wolseley came down. The camps were visited, the

troops reviewed, and a visit to the furthestmost point, Tambuck, was made. I happened to be out at Otoa at the time of Lord Wolseley's visit, which was made in the early morning. I had ridden in on my camel from Tambuck by myself, and saw him leave with all the staff and a large escort, the whole being protected by cavalry scouts, as if a very large force were near and great protection was required. Lord Wolseley rode round the camp at Tambuck and once past the Scots Guards, which were drawn up to receive him; his whole stay there was not ten minutes. There was a good breakfast waiting for him and his staff, many of whom had accepted the invitation of the officers of the Scots Guards to breakfast. I should have been hungry after a twenty-mile jolting railway ride and another eight miles on horseback, but no breakfast was partaken of, and a return was made to Otoa. Here the pangs of hunger seized on some, and they got what they could to eat from the Grenadier Guards and Lucas and Aird's people. Lord Wolseley had some Tommy Atkins' ration food on the Otoa platform, which he ate, greatly to the surprise of many "fuzzy-wig" natives, who made remarks. "Wallah, he eats the same as the soldiers," said some. "Billah, he does not drink ice like the other hawagahs," said others; but they all came to the conclusion he was not hungry. As soon as the train came up they all went back to Suakim, I in the last truck, to save me a twenty-mile ride, as my camel had done about fifty miles the day before. My camelman wanted to tie the two camels to the buffer of the last truck and ride with me, as he said the two camels could keep up with the train, and he seemed very hurt at my refusing to allow him to do so and ordering him to come quietly in with the animals and give them a good feed of commissariat hay at Handub in the middle of the



day. I was sorry for one thing that the campaign was over, as I had been asked to join the Intelligence Department after they left Otoa, as Brewster Bey did not know the road any further, and with the exception of Major de Cosson, of the water transport, no one had been over the road to Berber but myself, and he had only come from Berber to Suakim, and travelled mostly by night and had kept no account of the road. I always travel as soon as it gets daylight, stop in the middle of the day, and then go on about three and march till sunset so as to see as much of the country as possible, occasionally going across a waterless plain at night time, as there is nothing to be seen, and there is no difficulty about the transport animals, as they have easy marching.

The review of all the troops being over, orders were given for the majority of them to go away, and there was soon a general exodus of the majority of the English soldiers. I don't know if the review called for any special remarks. The troops all looked well, and in good training, but a bit dirty after their campaigning. The camel corps had certainly turned into a fine body of men, and, with a little more practice, they would have been able to go anywhere, and have followed up the dervishes. If they had been organized before they came down to Suakim instead of only getting into shape by the end of the campaign, they would have proved most useful. For Soudan fighting a camel, or more strictly speaking a dromedary corps, is indispensable; and one properly organized and mounted on camels of the country could make a dash over to Berber from Suakim in about six days; it has been done under four, and poor General Gordon made the ride once to Ad Damer on the Atbara, the same distance as to Berber, in three days

eight hours ; and only one man kept up with him on the final ride from Obak to Ad Damer. Two minutes is ample time for a body of four hundred men to form square and tie down their camels in front of them to form a breastwork, and with four Maxim guns at the corners of the square, and the men being picked shots, they could laugh at the dervishes and could always go from water to water all over the Soudan with ease. A light weight for a dromedary to carry is 280lbs. ; take a man with his rifle and clothes at 11 stone, or 154lbs., leaves 126lbs. for saddle, provisions, ammunition, and kit. The saddles used might easily be improved upon, and a modification of the native saddle adopted, which gives five different positions to ride in, and can be supplied with stirrups, so that the regulation seat can be used. The native saddles do not weigh half of those what our troops were supplied with. One baggage animal for every ten soldiers would be ample, and take everything included for a force of 400 fighting men and four Maxim guns 500 camels ought to be sufficient. After a little practice, and feeding and looking out after the animals properly, they ought to do at least 45 miles per day without fatigue, and this distance would enable a force to follow up the tribes. I believe everything as regards detail was left to the officer in command of the camel corps formed at Suakim, and it did him great credit getting his men into such a state of proficiency in such a short time, and with such bad animals to pick from among the camels that came from Egypt. The Indian riding camels were very fine beasts, and could go a great pace, but there were not enough of them to mount the whole of the men, and they are watered, I think, oftener than is really necessary.

The hospital and doctor's department was very well

organized, and I must say their kindness and the way they looked out after the wounded and sick was beyond praise, not only in the field, but in the hospitals and on board ship. It was quite worth while being sick to be looked out after by them and by those good nurses that had come out from England to all the worries and dangers of the climate of Suakim. Many were the blessings and heartfelt thanks that were bestowed on them; many a poor sufferer's last moments were comforted and cheered by their unremitting attention, and it was a beautiful sight seeing them going their rounds making the sick comfortable, and speaking words of encouragement to our poor boy soldiers. Many of them doubtless would have succumbed had it not been for the kindness received from our lady nurses. Unkind things have been said about them by cavillers who find fault with everything; and I do not think had there been the most confirmed woman-hater and bachelor among the patients, that when he came out of the hospital would not have given credit to those kind nurses who carried out their mission in such a thoroughly quiet and ladylike manner. Many and many is the look of thanks I have seen given by Tommy Atkins after he has been attended to by them; and there is no doubt that while ill at Suakim he was better cared for than if he had been in England.

The hospital ship *Ganges*, belonging to the P. and O. Company, was as comfortable as modern improvements could make her, and she was a picture of neatness and cleanliness. I don't think a single addition to the comfort of those on board could have been suggested, and those patients that were nearly convalescent had every game and amusement provided for them, besides any quantity of newspapers and books, all of which they had to thank the

Red Cross Society for. There was not a soldier or sailor, English, Australian, or Indian, in the expedition that did not derive a benefit from this Society; and many a luxury enjoyed and many an hour's recreation was solely due to them. Every sort of little thing was provided by their thoughtful care; and I know of no charity that ought to be more warmly supported than this, for charity it is in every sense of the word. Long after the campaign was over, and all the sick had gone, the cricket, lawn tennis gear, fishing tackle, books, and other games helped to while away many an hour which would otherwise have been spent by Tommy Atkins in the canteen, or getting into mischief. One or two of the sets of chessmen were taken away by the Indian regiments, no doubt in memory of the campaign; and I have often seen an attentive assembly of native officers sitting outside their tent doors looking on at a game of chess, in which they all seemed deeply interested.

In spite of all the comforts, all the attention, and all the skill of the medical men, the lines of graves in the International Cemetery began to get alarmingly long, and there could be no doubt that as soon as the great heat set in the number of deaths would increase most rapidly, especially as so many men were cooped up in Suakim in badly chosen encampments and on old and foul ground. There is no doubt that General Gordon was quite right in saying that the Soudan is not a fit place for young men who are not thoroughly developed and furnished, as for about four months in the year the climate is most trying; and unless a person is inured to roughing it and been in the habit of leading an open-air life, there is very little chance of his being able to stand the climate for any length of time. A person who leads a lazy life stands less chance of

getting on than one that leads an active and outdoor life; and it is a *sine qua non* that anyone that thinks about coming to the Soudan should have some special amusement over and above the ordinary daily routine of life, so as to find employment during the spare hours which are otherwise spent in thinking, which only tends to home-sickness and discontent, and the discontented person generally loses heart, and falls an easier victim to the climate.

The bigwigs of the expedition were the first to clear out, and were followed soon after by the railway people. What was done with regard to the railway I leave to another and special chapter. Whenever the railway is made will commence the true opening up of the Soudan to civilization, and the country can be dealt with in a practical manner. Connecting Berber with the Red Sea will revolutionize the whole system that has hitherto been adopted in dealing with the Soudan, and there can be no doubt that shortly after the railway is in working order the traffic along it will be enough to pay a handsome dividend, and allow the tribes to get rid of an enormous amount of produce, which now does not stand the heavy camel rates across the desert. The line will be a cheaply-made one, as there are no engineering difficulties whatever *en route*, no big bridges and embankments to make, and the cost of up keep and working need not be heavy.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SUAKIM-BERBER RAILWAY.

I THINK it better to devote an entire chapter to the subject of the Suakim-Berber railway. I have often been asked by people of all sorts and descriptions what I knew about the question, and my answer invariably has been "About as much as I know on other subjects concerning the Eastern Soudan." For years I have taken a great interest in railway construction, and have read as much as I could on the subject of construction of railways in various parts of the world. Of course, my experience is not that of an expert, but that of an ordinary on-looker, picking up a wrinkle here and there when occasion offered.

I have studied the war of gauges, and read the experience of others and their opinions on the subject. In 1880 I came to the conclusion that the easiest and most economical railway that could be built from Suakim to Berber was a metre gauge steel railway; and this was what I advocated and proposed to the Egyptian Government in 1880-81. It was at this date that I first broached the subject to the Egyptian officials.

I daresay it will not be uninteresting to my readers if I

relate how and why a railway from the Red Sea coast to the Nile was thus proposed to the Egyptian authorities. As far back as 1877 the question was first discussed by the late General Gordon and myself. Before that date I had thoroughly made myself *au fait* on the question of opening up the Soudan to commerce, and saw how impossible it was ever to make the Nile route a mercantile success. Really on reaching Berber the trade question commences, or whatever point is chosen near that town; the place where the railway strikes the Nile will become the great centre of civilization for Central Africa, and the seat of the future government of the country. Experience has taught us that no long distance railway can compete with economical water traffic, and that as machinery with what may be called its food, coal, will have to play the most important part in the future development of Central Africa, to get that machinery with its food on to the water-way above Berber in the cheapest and speediest manner possible is the main point to be considered. Were there forests in the Soudan from which an unlimited supply of wood could be obtained for fuel, the coal question would not arise, but the central portion of the Egyptian Soudan is entirely devoid of wood fit for burning, and that can be floated down the river. Soont, acacias, and ebony will not float properly, and the timber, as a rule, grows at some distance from the banks of the river, making the cost of getting it to the river's bank very heavy. Its scarcity, and the quantity of space occupied in stowing, precludes this method from ever being the right way of developing the steam traffic of the river. I do not say that enough wood could not be obtained to last for a couple of years, but after that time great difficulties would arise in keeping the steamers going.

In the season of 1881 the camels of the country could no longer deal with the trade from Suakim to Berber, and prices had been run up as high as £10 to £14 per ton for the single journey to Berber. This rate was, of course, prohibitory to all classes of cheap merchandise, and made the food question *en route* a difficult one. There was no prospect of a drop in prices; on the contrary, higher rates were to be looked for, and the question of the Soudan trade coming to an untimely end on account of want of transport was not at all improbable. A railway, therefore, became an absolute necessity to the well-being and future development of the country; and the camels that would have been released from the long march between the sea and the Nile would thus have been employed at remunerative rates, bringing merchandise to the railway depôts *en route*. An argument was used by the opponents of the Suakim-Berber railway scheme that the very fact of making a railway through the Amarar, Hadendowie, and Bishareen country, the track the line of railway would follow, would cause discontent to these tribes *en route*, by taking away from the sheiks a certain amount of money earned by the camelmen of these tribes for the work they performed annually. I never could see the force of this argument. Firstly, the camels of the Amarars would have been employed locally, and especially in the development of the Tokar Delta trade, from where they could perform five voyages in their own country against one between Suakim and Berber. The work would not have been so exhausting for their transport animals; they would have to pay no tolls; would have been nearer their families; and would have improved their resources in every way. The capital was ready to be employed in the country growing cotton, and it would have solved the difficulty of local



transport between Tokar and Suakim, as the majority of the camels were taken up for long voyages. I discussed the question with the Amara sheiks, and I found them delighted with the idea of the railway, as they saw that if it was once made the Egyptian Government would no longer require camels to carry their goods and troops free to Berber.

The Amara tribe, being the nearest to Suakim, were usually the greatest sufferers. In fact, there is nothing the tribes dislike more than having their camels seized by the Government to carry goods to the interior, and the practice which was invariably made of doing so by the Egyptian authorities caused more discontent than any other of their actions, and was the heaviest tax the tribes had to pay, as it was a tax which never could be computed and there was no knowing how often camels would be required. Government sometimes paid the sheiks small sums for the use of their camels, but for only a small portion of them; so many per cent. were always taken free, and the rate of hire, averaged all round, was at least 75 per cent. less than they got from the merchants. In 1881 all the tribesmen who did transport work looked upon the Egyptian officials as a set of robbers, and cordially detested them, and the Europeans, who were quickly supplanting the Mahomedan merchants, as their best friends, by whom they were always certain of getting well paid. I am afraid the contempt on behalf of the merchant and camel-man for the Egyptian authorities was mutual and did the Government no good.

With the Hadendowies it was the same. Instead of bringing their goods all the way from Filik to Cassala and then on to Suakim, their camels would have been employed in bringing in produce from Filik and the Taka district to the

section of the line between Ariab and Haritree. Their tribe and their commerce would both have become centralized, and they would have been able to barter their produce on this section at better rates comparatively than they received at the coast, while they would have got their grain and cloth in exchange at a cheaper rate. The Bishareen tribes would also have been able to make use of the section between Obak and Berber, and would have found employment for their camels near Berber, but I do not think that they would have cared so much for the railway, as they only ran the risk of their camels being seized at Suakim by the officials, for the Berber officials seldom or ever required large numbers of animals for transport service, as the Government stores went up-country from the coast and not from the Nile to the sea. Over and over again when the Bishareen used to bring cargo down from Berber for the merchants they used to stop the majority of their camels near Handub, say about ten miles short of Suakim, and then use about ten per cent. only of their number to bring in the whole of the merchandise by relays, and then perhaps only as far as the Sharter wells, where delivery of the cargo was taken. In olden days Government officials went but a short distance from their offices, and the Egyptian rule was but nominal outside the beaten tracks of the Soudan. It is, indeed, no exaggeration to say that the majority of the Soudanese had never seen an Egyptian official: only those who visited the towns were brought into contact with them, and their experience was certainly not a pleasant one. I trust it is clear that the railway would not have been a cause for loss of income to the camelmen, but, on the contrary, would have aided the tribes to earn money. Putting aside the question of transport, the railway would have supplied employment to the

tribes, for what with repairs and local labour on the different sections of the route a large amount of money would have found its way into their hands.

Once the Nile and the sea had been joined together by the iron road, the fertile Nile valley would have found a market for its crops. Taking rate of railway freight at £2 per ton, all grain crops could have found a local and an export market at Suakim, and as long as camels were employed it took at least six of them on an average to bring a ton of goods to the coast, and at 7s. 6d. per head, it is equivalent to about 40s. per ton. Thus for the 260 miles march there was no profit. Coals, delivered at 25s. per ton ex-ship at Suakim, the colliers transhipping their cargoes alongside the jetties into railway trucks, and calculating railway freight to the Nile as low as £1 per ton, would make the cost of fuel at Berber about 50s. per ton. One ton of coal does as much work as eight tons of wood, and its storage space is, of course, so much less, and with fuel at the price named, and new steamers of modern construction on the Nile, navigation at once becomes practicable.

It must not be for one moment imagined that the scheme of the railway and the navigation of the Nile were taken into consideration by a lot of hare-brained enthusiasts who did not know what they were talking about, but by men who were thoroughly competent to undertake the pioneering of any country, and who only arrived at their decision after thrashing out the why and wherefore of every step they contemplated. A fairer and a better one than the commission appointed to consider and collect evidence for the project of a railway between Suakim and Berber could not have been found in Egypt. I believe their report has never been published. I give it here *in extenso*. The names attached

to it may not be known, so I record their individual experience. Their unanimous decision only confirms that of the Syndicate which submitted the Suakim-Berber Railway project to the English and Egyptian Governments.

The first signature, that of Omar Loufti, the President, is not so important as those that follow. The President was Minister of War during part of 1882 and 1883.

Osman Rifki was one of the best Generals Egypt possessed, and had been Commander-in-Chief and Governor-General of the Soudan, of which he had had a good deal of experience. Abd-el-Kader Pasha had also been a good Governor-General of the Soudan. Rousseau was a French Civil Engineer, high up in the Public Works Department, and a very capable man.

Col. Watson, R.E., had surveyed the Nile from Berber to nearly the Lake Albert Nyanza, and had crossed the Suakim Berber route. Colonel Mason Bey was a Confederate naval officer, and had also crossed the desert to Berber, had been up the Nile to the Albert Nyanza Lake, which he had circumnavigated, and Rigollet was a Frenchman who understood public works. The two Frenchmen, whose compatriots as a rule are against all English enterprises in Egypt, having signed the report, went to prove what they thought of the enterprise. The following is their report :—

“The Commission appointed to report upon the best route for a railway to the Soudan having carefully considered the papers which have been submitted to them by the Council of Ministers, as well as other documentary and verbal evidence, have to report as follows :

“At the present time the Soudan, although a dependency of Egypt, is so far removed—geographically by the obstructions to navigation in the Nile—that communication between

the two countries is a matter of great difficulty, and it is universally acknowledged that steps must be taken as soon as possible to obtain an improved means of intercourse.

“Three propositions have been made with a view of attaining this end, which are as follows :

“1st. To construct a railway along the Nile, making the line either continuous from Cairo to the Sûdan in prolongation of the present railway to Siût, or, in order to save a portion of the vast expense which would be incurred by the construction of so long a line, to utilize the portions of the river which are navigable, and to build the railway only where the Nile is dangerous or impassable for boats.

“2nd. To make a railway from Suakim on the Red Sea to Cassala and Cos Redjeb on the River Atbara, and thence either direct to Khartûm or to Abu Harras on the Blue Nile.

“3rd. To make a railway direct from Suakim to Berber on the Nile.

“The first of these proposals is that which found favour in Egypt during the reign of the late Khedive, and a very considerable expense has already been incurred in the construction of a portion of the line near Wady Halfa and on the contract for the purchase of the railway material.

“The main arguments used in favour of following the Nile Valley are: That Egypt would be put in connection with the Sûdan by a line wholly within her own territory; that there would be less risk of a foreign power interfering with the line of communication; and that the whole traffic of the Sûdan would necessarily pass through Lower Egypt. It is easy to understand the force of these arguments, and if the Nile Valley scheme were feasible there would be a good deal to be said in favour of adopting this route.

"A careful examination of the question tends, however, to show that the expense of making the line would be so great, and the cost of working it so excessive in proportion to the traffic which could reasonably be expected, that the arguments against the adoption of this line are far greater than those in its favour. If the present line to Siût were extended to Shendy, a distance of about 1,800 kilometres, the work could not be completed for less than £8,000,000. If the line were made from Wady Halfa the cost would be at least £4,000,000. If this part of the line only were built it would be necessary for goods coming from the Upper Nile to be transferred from the river to the railway at Shendy, and back to the river at Wady Halfa; two more transshipments would be required at the First Cataract, and another change would have to be made at Siût before the goods were finally placed in the railway waggons, which would bring them to Cairo or Alexandria. These numerous changes would cause such delay and expense that it is very probable merchants would continue to follow the comparatively inexpensive camel route from Berber to Suakim, and that the railway would not get enough traffic to pay expenses.

"If, in order to encourage the use of the railway, the Egyptian Government were to raise the customs' duties in the Red Sea Ports, the effect would be to check commercial enterprise in the Sûdan, the very thing which the railway is to be made to develop.

"It was suggested by a Commission appointed in 1881 that in order to diminish the expense the railway should only be constructed from Wady Halfa to Dongola; that the river should be utilized from Dongola to Debbeh; and that at the latter point a depot should be formed to which the Sûdan traffic would be transported on camels from Khartûm, Kordofan, etc.

“This scheme might diminish the expense of the line, but would, however, be very unsatisfactory from a commercial point of view, and it would not be convenient for the transport of troops as the tariff would be very high in consequence of expense of working being very great.

“The Commission, therefore, feel it their duty to give a decided opinion against the construction of the Nile Valley Railway, and they regret that a large sum has already been expended in the hopeless task of developing this route. To expend, however, on this account a still larger sum upon the construction of a railway the prospects of which are so unfavourable, would, in their opinion, be a mistake from many points of view.

“The second line of railway which has been proposed is one from Suakim to Cassala, Cos Redjeb, and Khartûm, or, as an alternative, from Cos Redjeb to Abu Harras, on the Blue Nile. The data which have been laid before the Commission with respect to the feasibility of this line, from an engineering point of view, are very vague, but it appears probable that considerable difficulties would be experienced in bringing the railway through the mountainous district north of Cassala, intersected as it is with numerous torrents, and also in crossing the country between the Atbara and Khartûm.

“As the total length of the line would be over 1,000 kilometres a moderate estimate of the total cost would be £3,500,000.

“The main argument used in favour of this line is that the railway would pass through a comparatively fertile district, from which local traffic might be expected.

“The great object to be obtained is, however, to place Cairo in the closest connection with the Nile Valley and the Sûdan in general, and this would not be done with advantage by the

formation of a round-about railway to Khartûm through an outlying district at a greatly increased cost.

"It is to be hoped that this railway may also be built at some future time, and that the province of Taka may obtain the advantage of rapid communication with the outside world, but it would not be just to sacrifice the good of the Sûdan at large for the benefit of one district. The Commission, after due consideration, therefore desire to record their opinion against the Suakim and Cassala line of railway.

"The third and last proposal is for the construction of a direct railway from Suakim to Berber on the Nile. The length of this line would be about 460 kilometres; it follows the shortest distance between the Red Sea and the Nile, and reaches the river at a point where it again becomes navigable. Between Berber and Khartûm there is only one cataract, and those who have passed over it are almost unanimously of opinion that with a comparatively small expenditure it could be made navigable at all times of the year, thus placing Berber in direct communication with the greater part of the Sûdan by means of the Blue and the White Niles.

"The line of railway from Suakim to Berber presents no serious engineering difficulties, and it could probably be opened for traffic within two years from the date of commencing the work. The principal argument which has been used against the construction of this line is—that as it starts from a port on the Red Sea Coast it would be easy for some other nation to interfere with the communication between Egypt and the Sûdan.

"Without wishing to discuss this argument, the Commission must call attention to the very great advantages which would follow the establishment of a line of communication that would bring Khartûm within about eight days' journey of Cairo.

"Another argument used against this line is that it would



divert the whole of the Sûdan traffic into the Red Sea, and prevent its passing through Lower Egypt, but as the railway is more particularly required for the development of traffic which now hardly exists, viz., that of cotton, sugar, etc., from the Sûdan, this argument has no great force.

"It must be remembered, too, that the saving which would be effected in the transport of troops and military stores would be very considerable.

"It is probable that if the railway were now in existence the revolt in the Sûdan which now gives so much trouble and causes such vast expense might either not have occurred at all or have been suppressed at an earlier date.

"The Commission have no hesitation in recommending that the line from Suakim to Berber be that adopted for the Sûdan railway, and that the work be commenced as soon as possible.

"In conclusion, the Commission desire to record their opinion that the construction of the railway from Suakim to Berber is essential for the well-being of the Sûdan, and that it is important in the interests of Egypt herself that she should take the lead in its construction.

"The Commission are of opinion that they should not pronounce on the political aspect of the question, as they are not sufficiently acquainted with the general policy of the Government.

"Signed, "OMAR LOUFTI,

"President, Minister of War and Marine.

"OSMAN RIFKI,

"ABD-EL-KADER,

"ROUSSEAU,

"C. M. WATSON, Colonel,

"MASON, Colonel,

"C. H. RIGOLLET,

} Members.

"War Office, Cairo,

"24th June, 1883."

It was, therefore, in June, 1883, that the Egyptian Government were recommended by a Commission of their own appointment to immediately commence a railway from the Red Sea Littoral to the Nile for the well-being of the Soudan and to deal with the rebellion then taxing the energies of the country. Had the railway been begun then—and there was no decent excuse for delay—the Soudan would have had a very different history, and England and Egypt would not have had to mourn the loss of so many of their people.

About the last words Hicks Pasha said to me when bidding good-bye outside Suakim, on his way to Khartoum, were —

“I hope, Wylde, when I come back that I shall do most of the return desert journey on the Suakim-Berber Railway.”

Poor fellow! if the railway had been commenced when it ought to have been, his bones would not now be whitening the plain round Melbeis. I do not know if it ever will be known what reasons there were at Cairo for delaying the construction of this line. I have heard it was on account of the French Resident's jealousy of any undertaking backed by Englishmen, but the two French members of the Commission had recommended it; one would think that they would have refused to sign anything which their Minister did not approve. As far as the Egyptian officials were concerned, the project was well thought of by the majority. His Highness the Khedive was greatly interested, and did everything in his power to further a speedy commencement; he was also thoroughly supported by His Excellency Cherif Pasha, the Prime Minister, and even Ismael Pasha Eyoub, late Governor-General of the Soudan and Minister of the Interior, a man very unpopular with Cherif Pasha, used all his influence to carry the line through.

With Nubar Pasha it was unpopular, and all who had speculated in land along the line down the Nile Valley, for it would

entirely put an end to any future chance of their property becoming valuable, and at one time speculation was very heavy in likely properties near the future depôts. As far as I have seen there is enough land at Berber and Suakim and other places *en route* to be bought to make many people's fortunes, and, as far as I am concerned, I should be quite content with an acre or two of building land at each end of the line at Suakim and Berber. Land that now has hardly any value on the banks of the Nile will become nearly as valuable as land in the Delta, and there is no chance of the Nile failing on the section between Khartoum and Berber, whatever it may do when it arrives at the Delta. There are no dykes to break and cause floods, and the higher the Nile the less labour required to raise the water for irrigating.

Those who were responsible for throwing obstacles in the way of making the Suakim-Berber Railway set their faces against the evidence and the opinions of men like General Gordon, Lord Dufferin, Sir Samuel Baker, and others. Now that it has been neglected and shelved there is no trade left in the Soudan. The country has become one charnel house where every crime is perpetrated by its savage and victorious population against those that are grounded in the first rudiments of civilization. What a *fiasco* and what an insult to common sense the whole business has been! Those who would not do their duty when they could, and who stood aloof seemingly not wishing to understand the question, are now, to save their reputation with their electors, taking up a business which they knew they never intended to carry out. What is now being expended over the attempt to make the Suakim-Berber Railway would have been sufficient to have paid a three per cent. guarantee on the cost of the railway that was proposed to them for eternity.

I have nothing to say against the contractors. On the contrary, they showed every probability of being able to carry out their part of their agreement, but the surest sign that they knew that the railway was not intended to be made was that they shipped out the whole of the plant as quickly as possible. I am not blaming them, nor would any other business man. The order to make the railway was a good one; there were the commission, trade discounts, and other items which leave such a pleasing memory behind when an order runs into nearly seven figures. The more work to be done, the more stuff to be bought, the more the dollars. If they had had five times the order I should, if I had been in their place, have bought the plant and shipped it out. What must have been evident to the Government was that the plant could not be landed at Suakim at anything like the pace it was being shipped, and that with speedy work and every available bit of land that could be utilized, without taking into consideration the military expedition, it wanted, at the very lowest calculation, at least eight months to land the railway materials and its belongings at Suakim.

Who was going to pay the demurrage on the steamers while waiting to discharge, as it would have increased the cost of the railway to a very great extent? There was not the jetty accommodation, there was not the harbour room for the freight vessels and the transports at the same time, and there was not a man who knew anything about the Soudan who believed the railway was intended to be made, and certainly the Indian railway officers that were sent to Suakim did not believe that they were going to Berber or anywhere near it. I never could see, as we say in India, what the "tumasha" was about unless it meant the taking of the Soudan. Then we had the solemn assertions of the Government that the Soudan was to be abandoned, and

now there was no one left to rescue, why should we annex the Soudan ? If the Government intended it as a blind to keep the British public quiet till the awful Soudan catastrophe had had time to cool down, they certainly played a very clever party move, and someone must have told their contractors "never mind waiting till you can purchase new stuff, ship anything you can get hold of," and accordingly the plant that had been used in the construction of the Tilbury Docks and the Hull and Barnsley Railway was sent out to Suakim. It no doubt answered the purpose of the Government, and the purchasers at home most likely only paid for a second-class article.

All I can say of the 21 miles of railway that was put down is, that it was far from being a commercial line—although it was quite good enough for its purpose, to last till the rains. The way the line was constructed was not that of a mercantile company, and the perfect babel of languages spoken by the workmen and coolies of course gave little hope of the work being carried out quickly or properly. With a better system of routine, and with better jetty accommodation for the freight ships, the delays that took place daily might have been obviated. One ship that was perhaps alongside a jetty discharging rails had to cast off to allow a vessel to come alongside to discharge sleepers, and when fish plates with their nuts and bolts were required it was found that there were none in the harbour and they had to be sent for to the southern anchorage, some 12 miles off. One day it was too much rail and not enough sleeper, and *vice versa* the next day. I don't think that in 24 hours more than 1,000 yards of line were ever put down ; if it was over this distance it was but a trifle, and this in an easy country with the army, navy, coolies, and navvies all at work. The mixed work of civilian and military was not a happy idea as it was unfair on both. From a civilian point of view—as

it was a military line I am open to correction from the military if they do not agree with me—the military were altogether put out at having civilians to construct the line for a purely military purpose. Granted the military authorities at home had not enough competent Royal Engineers to construct the line at the pace required, there was India to draw on, and at the time they could be spared to have come to Suakim. As it was, several Royal Engineer officers, with a trained staff of natives and workmen, came from India, where they had been in the habit of doing nothing but constructing railways; and, had the original idea of making a metre gauge railway been adhered to (some of the plant and engines had actually arrived at Suakim), there can be no doubt that what with the Royal Engineer officers and their men that had been at Suakim during 1884, the local labour which had got into shape, the Indian Railway Construction Staff could have put down the line quicker and better than purely civilian contractors could have done under the circumstances. I believe that in the time the civilian contractors put the line down to Otoa, the purely military element would have got to Disibil, a few hours' march only from Singat, where poor Tewfik Bey was killed, and the summer residence of the inhabitants of Suakim. Singat could then have been easily reached from Suakim, and there would have been none of that haste to withdraw from the country.

The most absurd part of the whole railway business was employing navvies. They were utterly unsuited to the climate and the country and the very last people to get on with the natives or to do many hard days' work in succession under the fearful Soudan sun. They did not understand the Indian character of their fellow-workmen, and it would not have taken long for them to have come to an open rupture with the Soudanese. Discipline they had none, and they were overpaid—

overfed, and underworked. At their rate of wages, 10s. per diem, with everything found, two or three Greek, Maltese, or Italian workmen could have been employed for the same price and many of them very likely would have settled down in the country for good, whereas there was not a chance of one of the English workmen ever remaining behind except in the cemetery. The climate had hardly had time to tell upon the English navvies before they left. If they had remained behind for one summer I don't believe, with the mode of life they lived, that one of them would ever have seen their homes again.

The line as far as it was laid to Ot<sup>o</sup> was only done in a very rough manner. No culverts were used over the water-courses and nullahs, and the first heavy rains washed away all the ballast placed in the water-courses. The line at present along all the levels is in fair order, and with three or four days' work the whole section to Otoa might be made fit for traffic again. To make what is already put down a serviceable mercantile line, masonry culverts and drains are required. The line where it runs over the nullahs is still intact; the ballast is washed out from under the sleepers, which rest on the bed of the nullah. These only want raising (and some renewing) again on stone supports to their old level, as the water that runs down these water-courses is never sufficient to wash the line bodily away or undermine masonry supports made of the stone found in the country. There was a great deal said at the time of construction that the enemy would pull up at night time and destroy what was laid down during the day. This I never believed. About the last time I was up the line was in May, 1887, over two years after the line had been left, and there was very little damage done even then. Sleepers are burnt here and there, but the line itself remains, and not a fish plate taken off, although boxes of tools were left behind along the line, seem-

ingly on purpose, when it was abandoned, and nothing was easier for the natives if they had used the tools to have totally destroyed and removed the line altogether. Therefore it has lain for two years in the enemy's country without any grievous harm, and I daresay had the line been put down with cast-iron pot sleepers or steel sleepers as now used it would have been absolutely untouched. Should there ever be a line made from Suakim to Berber, which I suppose there will be some day, this experience will prove useful, and it is not expecting too much, I think, to believe the natives will leave the line absolutely alone. The nearer one gets to Ariab the less chance there is of the natives being mischievous, and on the section between Ariab and Obak and Obak and Berber there is hardly any population. Most likely the annals of this railway, if it ever has any, will be free from records of damage done by the tribes that border it. One thing is certain, the item for repairs on account of mischief need never be apprehended as likely to be a large one, and subsidies to sheiks will not be heavy.

A volume could be written on the subject of the attempt to make this railway: of what was done, and especially of what was not done. Looking at it as a railway, I am afraid the unanimous opinion was that it was a mistake, and that it was never really more than an election dodge. If the accounts are ever taken out of the pigeon-holes in which they are now resting, and examined, they might tell a tale. I should think that if everything that can be charged to the railway be taken into account, viz., freight out and home, labour, cost of material, and other items, it will be found that the twenty miles put down runs as nearly as possible into £50,000 per mile. I may be wrong; I hope I am. For this sum there are twenty miles of railway traced out with the metal on the ground, which no company would make use of, as the first thing they would do



would be to alter the gauge to the metre standard, and the sleepers from wood to iron or steel, as being the best for Soudan work, especially through the hills, where the white ants and dry rot get rid of every wood nearly, except acacia or iron wood, neither of which are suitable for railways. The cuttings at Quarantine Island, which are useful, as the bottom of their levels will be in future the level of the island, as the higher ground will be used for reclaiming the sea that now lies between the ends of the respective jetties. The jetty heads are all useless; they were put down at great expense, and it would be interesting to know what they cost. Common soft wood was made use of, into which the "toredo" or boring-worm eat its way soon after it was put into the water, and now the balks of timber, which are at least a foot square, are entirely useless, and the jetties are highly dangerous, as they, with their heavy top weight of sound wood and rubbish, may collapse at any time. Iron screw piling should have been used, as the jetties would have cost but little more than those put up, and would have lasted nearly for ever. Any Company or Government that had taken over Suakim would have secured a valuable piece of property had these been made of iron. Now everything will have to be done over again, and a new start made. Taking the whole work performed, there is nothing that will not have to be done over again, and the sum total of the value of all the labour and all the money expended, is a little earth work in the shape of cuttings and the part of the jetties that have been recovered from the sea.

The only stone building on Quarantine Island is the hospital, which is a small one, and might be used as an office, and the old Egyptian Government coal-sheds, which were enlarged and turned into another hospital. The condensers are very fine ones, and worth looking after. I believe, running them at

their highest capacity, they make nearly 300 tons of water per diem, equivalent to, say, 60,000 gallons. They can never be looked upon to make a commercial investment, as they would prove a white elephant to the possessor, and if it were decided to make the inhabitants of the town procure their water only from them and close the Sharter wells, I do not believe then that the monopoly would pay, as there are not enough rich people at Suakim who would buy water to cover the cost of maintenance, and who ever got the condensers would have to be heavily subsidized by Government to keep them on. When Suakim opens up, and all the cotton ginning factories are running again and steamers call to take in and discharge cargo, there may be a chance of their paying fairly well as long as they are subsidized, but then the best way of bringing water to Suakim will be from Erkoweet.

The whole water question on the Suakim-Berber route was greatly misunderstood, and I never could make out why such a despondent view was taken of it. The travellers that had all gone over the beaten track between the coast and the sea had evidently never deviated a yard from the road, and my information and the opinion I formed was thoroughly proved on the Handub and Tambuck section of the road; and if on this section, there is no reason to doubt the correctness of my views as to the water capabilities of the other portion. The Handub-Tambuck section secures the drainage from the underground springs in the neighbouring mountains. It is known that there is plenty of water at and near Disibil, which takes the drainage from Singat again on the Odrus part of the road that also procures its water from the same source. From Haritree to Kokreb, through the mountains, there is plenty of good water both on and off the road, especially at Haritree. At Kokreb water can be procured the whole year round anywhere

in the Khor by digging down three or four feet. At Ariab there is an unlimited quantity at the Guerowait wells on the road, and from half an hour to an hour's march north of Ariab a large system of wells commence at Konshateet, showing a large fresh-water supply. Putting Ariab, with its surrounding wells, at from 1,800 to 1,900 feet above the sea, with the higher ground to the north and eastward, the water must fall westward and southward. There have been no attempts made to sink wells between Ariab and the Nile, except at Obak, where water is found in small quantities, and generally brackish, being less so after heavy rains; and at Mohebe, about 10 miles from Berber, where the water is again good. The drainage from Ariab runs a few miles north of Obak, and passes north of the Obak sand dunes. We have water at Ariab, say, at 1,800 feet, and again at Mohebe, at 1,200 feet. At both places it is fresh, but off the water-course; at Obak it is brackish. No attempts have been made to procure water at the Khor; and the Obak wells have existed for centuries. It is certain that water must exist in the line of drainage between Ariab to Mohebe, by the fact that there is fresh water at both ends of it, and with modern appliances the wells could be easily constructed. At Obak the road branches off south to the Atbara and the old Pyramids of Meroe, and from Ariab there is a northern road to the coast near Berenice, entirely unknown to Europeans. Most likely in ancient times there was a trade route from Meroe to Berenice.

The idea of pumping up condensed water from Suakim in pipes along the line of march was a brilliant one. The thin iron pipe was but a tender, fragile thread on which the water supply was to depend. An active enemy could soon have wrecked the hopes of the expedition by destroying the pipes at night time, and it would have taken a small army alone to guard the water communications. The idea, I do not think,

lasted long, as the military authorities, by the time they reached Tambuck, found they could procure a great deal more water than ever they gave the country credit for, and they most likely would have abandoned the scheme. What with the railway, condensed water, ice, and other luxuries the march to Berber would have been an expensive one, and Englishmen have thoroughly deteriorated when they cannot do a bit of African campaigning without the help of every modern appliance. I wonder what our ancestors would have said to us if they could have been present at Suakim, and seen the way in which we set about our work in the nineteenth century. England would never have secured her foreign possessions with the lot of English that are going about in the present day, and it will take us all we know to hold our own if we don't look out. We do not seem to be the same men who undertook the 1868 expedition to Abyssinia, for they did do something. It may be the electric telegraph ties the hands of our leaders. I really think that if the expedition had been left to the Guard officers who had been shooting in the Soudan they would have made a better job of it than those who were responsible for the 1885 campaign.

It is a matter of history that the railway stopped at Otoa, 200 miles out. To me it was a wonder that it got so far. We were all certain that the Government never intended to put down another mile. The weather was getting hot, and the beef-and-beer-consuming navy was not in it. I don't know what to say about the scramble to get back; it was an undignified one, and carried out with unseemly haste. I don't think anyone was not pleased that the affair was over, as without a policy no one seemed to have any heart in their work; there was just enough experience gained to enable them to say they knew a little of the country between the mountains and the coast, but

of the inhabitants nothing, except that they were a fine plucky set of men, who wore very little clothes, and had fuzzy wigs. Of the mountains nothing had been seen. During both years, 1884 and 1885, not an English soldier had seen Singat, the summer residence of the Suakim people, or Erkoweet, with its beautiful trees and running water. The furthestmost point on the Berber road that had been reached was just short of Disibil, and here their experience ended. A very sad result, no doubt, after fooling away so many valuable lives, leaving us the laughing-stock of foreign countries, murdering and slaughtering so many natives, spending so many millions, and having nothing to show for what was done! What bitter remembrances the public must have of the whole business! Hundreds of families in mourning, having lost their relations for no good! The only consolation to them is that their kith and kin died doing their duty, and obeying the orders of those who were in power at the time, but who did not know what they were about. Our invisible foe sprang from the hills and scrub, following the last soldiers and railway train up, so as to share the plunder of the camps left behind. Tambuck camp, half an hour after the last soldier left, was swarming with natives searching for odds and ends of rope, etc., and the miscellaneous rubbish that is generally left behind on these occasions—useless to Englishmen, but of great value to natives. At Otoa a few shots were fired by the natives to hurry up the departure of the friend of the Egyptian. At Handub there was more gear to get away, and more firing than at Otoa. The exodus from Handub was amusing—the iron-clad train bringing up the rear under a smart attack from the dervishes. The natives no doubt said “Good-bye, madmen, who come all the way into our country to shoot, and take only the horns of the animals away. Then you come and kill us for fighting to be free, when your whole

conversation to us is Why do you allow yourselves to be bullied? You said you came to rescue garrisons; you have not done so - Good-bye, plucky men, who we cannot beat. Good-bye, liars, who have told us untruths." They, poor people, have no personal ill-feeling for us; they only look upon us as a parcel of clever madmen in the pay of the Egyptians.

The packing up and departure from Suakim of the railway officials took place about the same time as the troops, and the steamers at the southern anchorage, out of which nothing had been taken, were sent back through the Canal to England to discharge their cargoes, which, by the time they returned, would have cost a pretty penny. Here was another sure sign that the railway was never likely to be undertaken again, as the cargoes would have been discharged at Suakim instead of being sent home, and that there was no intention of ever smashing the Mahdi, or it ever being "as true as the sun shines in heaven that British soldiers will be in Khartoum."

The lessons taught by the attempt to make the Suakim-Berber route have been many; the experience gained no doubt valuable, but costly. It is not advisable to use civilian contractors to make railways through an enemy's country in Africa in time of war, and it is a mistake mixing up the two elements together. It should have been purely civilian or purely military. If anything of the sort is required again it is to be hoped the Indian Royal Engineers, with their proper Construction Companies, will be allowed a chance of showing what they can really perform. Then there can be no doubt of better results done with skill and in an orderly and quiet manner, without fuss.

The gear left behind in the shape of rails, sleepers, and tools, tanks, wood, etc., would have made a nice fortune for many of the Arabs, and had they taken advantage of the position they

could have made a very comfortable, stronger, and better position than their own place at Tamaai. They had splendid water accommodation left behind them, and the platform, place for stores, and cement block houses would have made their leaders good headquarters. It was curious that they never made use of them by occupying the place permanently, as it was the key of the road to Berber; from there they could have held the northern road, down which supplies arrived, and it would have effectually cut off the Amarars and Bishareens by land from Suakim.

There is a future for the Soudan and a railway, as long as the Turk and Egyptian are kept away from the country. They have been bad masters; they have been fully tried and found wanting. Like the locust, they have eaten every green blade in the country. No undertaking could spring up but it was immediately nipped in the bud; nothing could commence to germinate when immediately it was stifled; no development and no progress of any kind could be fostered. Where are the indigo factories and indigo industry that was formerly such a source of revenue and made the prosperity of Schendy and Metemneh gone? Ask the Jaleens and inhabitants of that district if they remember the circumstances under which their ancestors were roasted alive by the Turks in the indigo factories, and the buildings and their plant made a crematorium for the leading inhabitants of those towns. Did not the indigo industry die that day with the wretched victims of Turkish misrule, and are there not examples in every district of Egyptian misrule, and has not the whole country gone back to chaos and confusion simply through the detestable cruelty that has been perpetrated?

Look at the boilers and machinery for cotton-cleaning and cotton-pressing at El Teb, another mark of the sheer inability

of the Egyptian to undertake and carry through any business unless he gets a foreigner to do it for him! The Egyptians tried to start cotton-growing at Tokar. Their attempt only drove the inhabitants away, as the first thing they did was to seize the land and so over-tax the people that it did not pay them to work or to run the chance of having one bad season. The Europeans were less exacting, and took a mutual interest with the natives. The result was that they both made money, and that the natives were contented, but it was only under the protection of Europeans that the natives could grow cotton, and it was impossible for the Egyptian Government, with all their plant, all their money, and all their prestige as a dominant power, to make friends or do anything with the inhabitants of the Tokar Delta. It is the same with the salt industries. They have made no mark there or left one single work of utility behind, and so it would be if they attempted to make the railway between Suakim and Berber. The railway will usher in British capital, British influence, and British management, and be a death-blow to Egyptian rule in the Soudan. From that time a new era for the country and its inhabitants will begin and enlighten them as to their rights, which are entirely in accord with what civilization wishes to see carried out.

Talk of the inhabitants turning nomad and not settling down! It is not to be wondered at. Where were they to find a haven of peace and rest, where they could raise one crop that they could call their own, hunted here and there? It is a wonder they never stood at bay before. They have had their revenge, and it is to be hoped that as long as Englishmen can remember the wrongs done their country, and the sad lesson we have been taught by the '84 and '85 campaigns, that everyone who knows the difference between right and wrong, will insist that a new commencement be made, and a firm and conciliatory



policy be henceforth carried out when dealing with the country, and aiding, if possible, the fixed population and those that have commercial instincts against the predatory tribes, who are greatly in the minority. The fixed tribes will unite together to protect their own interests, and will settle down as soon as they see they are not to be retaxed and regoverned by a rule distasteful to them. Then, in another generation, the Soudan will be as safe to travel in as it was under the benign rule of the late lamented Gordon Pasha, and then the Suakim-Berber Railway will be built, and if any Englishmen help in its construction they will endorse the opinion of the navy that the Soudanese are good people and do good work, as long as you can talk to them and they understand your ways.

It is useless to say any more. Read between the lines, and it will be seen what was done and what was left undone. Statistics are dry things to get through, and the attempt to make the railway will not bear being looked into and discussed, especially when regarded from a practical and mercantile point of view. Lucky contractors! How rarely a chance like theirs falls to the lot of a business house. These belong to the number who make money out of the misfortunes of others. Politically, I say nothing about it; no doubt it was a sop to those who were agitating before the Nile expedition was commenced, and who foresaw its failure. It meant, "Well, gentlemen, we will now commence the Suakim-Berber Railway to keep you quiet; you will see it will be no more successful than the Nile route." Had, however, half the energies of the force that was employed over the Nile route been expended at Suakim at the right time, the result would have been different. It is hard to fix the blame on any one individual, or to corner the person who was responsible, and the whole business had better be looked upon as a national failure—one

in which Englishmen have been tried and found wanting. In some few years hence, when the railway is built, it will be said, "The Egyptians had the Soudan once, and could do nothing with it; it is now quiet, and trade is going on. Let's go to Khartoum and to the Albert Lakes this winter; we can get there very easily in eleven and twenty-one days respectively from Charing Cross, and now we can travel so easy there is no discomfort, and we can get plenty of good shooting."

"Inshallah" it will be so, and England will awake to what her duty is to the Soudan, and see that hitherto we have miserably failed in all our attempts to grasp the Soudan question, as we have left it to be managed by a bureaucracy instead of by those who know the country—another example of how imperative it is that there ought to be an Intelligence Department at home to collect evidence on countries and people of whom little is known. In this case the advisers of the policy at home have been hoodwinked by the Egyptian.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EVENTS AFTER 1885 CAMPAIGN.

THE troops engaged in the 1885 campaign soon cleared out the place, and we once more sat down in Suakim to face another long and hot summer. There was nothing very special and worthy of remark in the embarkation, the troops went away one after the other with the commendable despatch and regularity which the Naval Department, as soon as they get away from Admiralty and home influence, are noted for, and when naval officers are left to themselves they always get through their work in a business-like and sensible manner. The Australian contingent were much cheered on leaving, and a very favourable impression was formed of them, and, what was more lucky, few of their number left their bones in the Soudan. Whether it was that they were better and older men than the majority of English soldiers, or that they were more accustomed to camp life and roughing it, I do not know, but certainly they had not the percentage of sick the other regiments had. I heard several of the Australians say they would like to return and have a look at the country as soon as it quieted down, as they were certain it was worth prospecting, and

they were simply astonished when I told them absolutely nothing was known about the mountains, nor the Abyssinian gold fields. The latter have never been visited by Europeans, and no mining takes place. I expect if gold is ever found in this part of the world that the miner will settle the Soudan question in a very short time, and will do the business in a more workmanlike and common sense manner than what our Government has done. The Guards' Brigade were also much cheered on leaving, and they also left behind pleasant memories, as they were greatly liked by all the natives. They had been what one might say the pioneers of the expedition after leaving Suakim on the way up country, and had been more brought into contact with the Arabs of the neighbourhood than other regiments. I don't know that it was because some of the officers of the Brigade had been in the country before and had learnt to respect the Arabs, but they certainly seemed to be the favourites, and one and all were popular, and everyone, native and European, had the greatest respect for the officer that commanded them. General Fremantle had certainly had a long, and I am afraid unthankful, task to perform at Suakim, and was hampered a great deal, as he could not do what he saw was the correct line of policy to carry out. Of course, someone who had never seen the Soudan gave him his instructions, and he had to obey them, no matter whether they were incorrect. I think it one of the most lamentable sights there is, seeing an honourable and capable English gentleman following out instructions and a policy that he knows to be wrong, and that can only in the long run lead to further complications. Such, however, is what our system demands, and as long as we are governed by civilian home clerks so long will chaos, confusion, and un-

necessary bloodshed continue. I have no hesitation in saying that had General Fremantle been left to himself he would very likely have settled the Eastern Soudan question. So far before the war we had had a triple control—Commodore Molyneux, Colonel Chermiside, and General Fremantle, all three capable men, but working different interests and the wrong policy; no wonder when these officers were tied by instructions that little or no good could be done. We were all sorry to say good-bye to General Fremantle, and we all felt we were saying adieu to a true friend who had our interests and welfare at heart. If leaving a good name and reputation behind in a country is any satisfaction, General Fremantle did so, and many of the natives and Europeans will follow his career and wish him luck wherever he serves. In Commodore Molyneux Suakim also lost another friend, who was very popular. The people had seen a good deal of him, and many is the small child that will miss him. The Suakim children are not troubled with shyness, and it was most amusing seeing the Commodore when taking his usual afternoon walk followed by several little boys, all of whom used to get “backsheesh” occasionally, and then do just as their little white brothers, rush off to the sweet-stuff shop. The little children know so well the difference between the Egyptian and English. Formerly the moment they used to see a Pasha they used to run away, Pasha and bogey being the same, while with Englishmen they seem to be friendly at once. Familiarity, as long as it does not go too far, in the Soudan does not breed contempt as it does in other countries.

We were shortly left at Suakim with one English regiment (the Shropshire), a battery of Artillery, and some Engineers, with the Indian contingent, consisting of three

infantry regiments and a cavalry regiment. The great question was what to do with the transport camels, many of which had now got into a very bad state through mange and from going through the campaign. All the good riding camels were sent to Egypt, and some of the good transport ones; as the others did not pay to keep they were shot, and the massacre used to go on daily; some were sold to the natives, who killed them for the meat and skins. It is a fact that some of the camels were sent outside Suakim into the middle of the Red Sea, hauled up from the vessel's hold, and swung over the side, shot, and dropped into the sea; others, in batches of fifty, were taken down to the ends of the jetties, shot through the head, thrown into the sea, and when the batch was got through tied to a line and towed out of the harbour. Many hundreds were got rid of in this way, and when I suggested it would be better and cheaper in the long run to make presents of these camels to the northern tribes who had been friendly and had never joined the Mahdi, the authorities at Suakim said no doubt it was the best thing to do with them, but they had strict orders to destroy them and throw them into the sea. So no doubt this extraordinary waste of life was due to home instructions. We English are funny people, and no doubt the foreigner is correct when he says our greatest enjoyment is when we are killing something, and to get through the number of camels that had to be killed at Suakim must have given someone plenty of first-class amusement.

As soon as the transport animals were shipped and done away with the officers of the Indian Transport Department left. I was sorry to part with them as they were a cheerful lot of fellows, and most hospitable, and thoroughly useful to their work. They used to get greatly chaffed by ever

one, and told not to come near, as they were sure to spread their camel infection. There is no doubt that it was entirely owing to their never-ceasing supervision and the beautiful order of their lines that prevented the disease from spreading, and the Colonel in command of this department deserved great credit for the work he did. Of course he got no thanks from those that ought to have given them, and I suppose the whole 1885 campaign was looked upon as such a mistake that it was impossible that really honest and good work should be noted. It seemed to me that all those that did the work got nothing, and all the flies on the wheels that holloed loudest got taken notice of. I don't mean for one moment to say that it was General Graham's fault, as his list was entirely revised by General Wolseley, who, of course, is a much better judge in these matters. While writing about rewards and what is due for services, there is one department amongst others that fared badly in both campaigns, I mean the Intelligence Department, and one whose information was ignored throughout. I don't understand what is the use of collecting information and then ignoring it. No one, I am sure, could have worked harder than the officers belonging to the Intelligence Department did, or were more courteous and obliging; one and all that I came across got on first rate with the natives and everyone. I don't suppose that all the fools in the service were put into the Intelligence Department, but certainly they were treated as such; nor could they have been treated worse or their information more thoroughly ignored. Whether it was a chapter of unhappy accidents on behalf of the generals, or that it was thought such audacity on behalf of the Intelligence Department giving such information, or whether the campaign was directed by electric

telegraph, I cannot tell, but this I do know, that the Intelligence Department were not responsible for what took place in any way, nor did the information they procured turn out to be incorrect on any one occasion. It is as well that this should be known, as the officers in the Intelligence Department may be blamed for it some day, and as far as I could see they were always correct, and it seemed that their advice was seldom or ever taken. I know no branch of the service that is more interesting than the Intelligence Department, and it embraces all sorts of knowledge—history, geography, botany, natural history in all its branches. It is a pity there is not more trouble taken by the Government about it. On any African campaign, or in a country little known about, there ought always to be a lot of scientific experts or people attached to the department, as they are sometimes of great help to a purely military matter, and I am sure that if we had had to go further up country they would have been able to have got most valuable information. In the two campaigns they worked hard, had little or no time except to do the military work, and from highest to lowest got no thanks, although they certainly did good service and added to the knowledge of the country. In the Abyssinian campaign there was a proper Scientific Department attached to the expedition. In the 1884 and '85 campaign it was entirely wanting.

By the time the summer came on the Shropshire had gone into a very good permanent camp at Graham's Point, behind which the hard level southern shore of the narrow entrance to Suakim anchorage is known; behind the Shropshire regiment the hospital huts were put up, and the defences of the encampment consisted of a ditch and earthwork with



wire entanglements in front; at the flanks were two redoubts. The north flank was very strong, as it was defended by the sea and men-of-war; but the left or sea flank was very weak, and could have been surprised at any time, as there is shallow water for over 400 yards seawards, where it is hardly anywhere more than four feet deep. Once the enemy had got round the flank and into the camp it would have been a case of bayonet work, as if a musketry fire had been opened all the shots would have gone into the hospitals. Luckily the enemy was never seen near the place. The Indian regiments that had taken part in the campaign were also relieved before the summer was over, and the Bengal cavalry relieved by some Madras cavalry. The new force was distributed at the following places: One regiment from the gravel pits and gravel yards to the south of the town to the left part of the town walls, taking in the cotton ginning factories. Another regiment in the town itself, taking the whole of the western defences and finding the garrisons for the water forts. The other regiment occupied Sand Bag Fort, which was situated to the north of the town. H redoubt was held by the artillery and the mounted infantry belonging to the Shropshire regiment.

The Quarantine Island was held by a couple of companies of Indians. On it was the officers' hospital and the general receiving place for patients before they got sent on to Graham's Point Hospital. The ordnance officer also lived there, as he had the shipping and getting rid of the things left behind. Talking about the ordnance, on the department leaving their permanent camp to go away they had a bonfire of all the things they did not want, which was great waste, as the value of the things destroyed was very large, and

they would have made splendid presents to those sheiks and natives that had been friendly, and have set some of them up for life.

They burnt, also, some old copper coal-scuttles; why they were ever sent out goodness only knows. Coal-scuttles in Suakim, where there is only that thin sheet of paper left between it and a hotter place! I do not know if they had copper warming-pans as well, but there were some stoves.

The enemy were seen regularly every day, but they did not annoy us at night like they did the summer before. The picket that used to go out scouting morning and evening used to exchange shots with the Hasheem force daily, but none of our side ever got hit, and the dervishes seldom or ever lost more than one or two per week. We could see the tactics displayed by their scouts quite easily by the aid of a good glass, and see the force told off from Tamaai and Hasheem take up their places for the day, and in the afternoon they used to return. It naturally limited our country for shooting, and it was not really safe anywhere more than from 1,000 to 1,500 yards from the forts. Englishmen, however, will run many risks to obtain sport, and I wonder some of us were not killed. I was shooting on one occasion with Lieutenant Paget, of the *Carysfort*, and some of the enemy came between us and the town, but as we got into some thick scrub they did not see us. On another occasion the Hasheem force set what one might call a trap for some of the Mounted Infantry officers, as they tied a gazelle up to a bush and then laid in wait for the officers, who generally used to ride some 200 or 300 yards ahead of the picket, so as to get a chance at the gazelle, which used to come up and feed close up to the fort finding the ground not so disturbed as it was further out where the natives used to come to watch the town.

This time the Arabs suffered, and not the officers, as just as one of the lieutenants was going to take his shot he saw an Arab behind a bush, so went back, when he got shot at by another Arab, who luckily missed him. He returned the fire, knocking the Arab over, and also dropped a second one. Then a skirmish took place between the picket and the Arabs, and they lost three or four more men. Some of the officers of the staff and Indian contingent also got cut off when out shooting in the open plain to the south of the town, and had a regular gallop for it before they could get round into safety.

I went out with Lieutenants Cotton and Jenkins, of the Shropshire, one afternoon to try for an Ariel gazelle. Through the telescope we used to see a good many feeding in the open to the north of the town, but as a rule they were very hard to get at. We went out a party of six, consisting of the two officers and their two orderlies, myself, and an Abyssinian, a plucky fellow, who knows how to use a gun. He was the only one unmounted, and I only had a mule out that day. A little more than two miles north we saw two Ariel in the distance, it might be another mile ahead. Being badly mounted, I did not think it safe going further than little Khor Tobain, so let the others go on and turned up the Khor. After they had left me about five minutes, and just as I had dismounted to get a shot at quail or sand-grouse, I heard the shouts of the natives urging on their camels. Luckily I was behind a bush, and I saw about a dozen natives going after my companions. I could not fire to draw their attention, as they would have come on after me, and I could not have escaped. As soon as they had passed me I went back as fast as I could towards the Western Redoubt, and when I saw I was not followed I turned round to see what

was going on, and I saw a pretty stern chase, the ground being quite open. The enemy had dashed out of the bush into the open, and had they not shouted they might have got much nearer than they did before being discovered. The pursued had to make a long gallop round before they got into safety, and they immediately sent one of their orderlies off in a line with the Western Redoubt to look for me. I signalled him and he came up, and I heard what a narrow shave they had, and soon after the others came up, and we had a hearty laugh at our escape. We could see the Arabs on their camels coming back and making towards Hasheem. When they got opposite us they got off their camels and opened fire, one of their bullets going into the ground right amongst us. We saw the mounted infantry picket coming up about a mile off, so we left them to have a shot or two at the Arabs and made up our minds to go south of the town and try for a gazelle, as the chances were against us being chased twice in the day. We got into the bush south of the town, a favourite place for gazelle, just before sunset, and Jenkins and Cotton each got a gazelle. We got some quail and I got a couple of hares, and got back to town just as it was dark, after an amusing afternoon, with a change of food from the everlasting beef and mutton. Plenty of sand-grouse used to be killed every morning; artificial pools were made in the desert about 600 yards from the water forts, which were filled overnight, and the sand-grouse used to come to drink in the morning and were shot while flying round the water holes. Fair sport used to be got, averaging from about five to twenty brace per gun. Ring-doves near the whole year round used to be got, and passage-doves during the spring and autumn flights; quails also. A few bustard were killed, but of course near the town they were

rare, although they are very common on the plains to the north, and at Tokar they simply swarm, seven or eight in a day being an ordinary bag. The fishing in the harbour was also very fair, and there were always four or five boats out every morning and evening catching fish with English rods and line, and also by hand line. The grey mullet used to give fine sport, and used to run up to six and seven pounds, the ordinary size about two pounds; they were caught with bread and paste. The bonita, cavalla, rock cod, bream, wrasse, and gar fish used also to be very plentiful, and the big fish, up to twenty and thirty pounds, used to give grand sport. Other amusements consisted of lawn tennis, cricket, athletics, horse racing about once a month, and boat sailing, and a regatta used to take place once a week. What with the military bands and the very hospitable Indian messes receiving once a week, besides the Shropshire Regiment once a week, we used to be able to kill time, and during 1885, after the worst of the summer was over, we had a very pleasant time of it. There is no doubt that, as far as the military were concerned, they were most popular with the natives, and the inhabitants of Suakim thoroughly appreciated the English, and they saw the difference between them and the Egyptians. They could see that the troops of the one nation were better looked out after and more contented than the troops of the other, and that they were happier—soldiers by profession, not by compulsion. Suakim might be said to be quite gay, and there was a certain amount of prosperity of a military description about it—which, however, was far from being removed from that of a mercantile one—which found more employment for the inhabitants. There was a good deal of misery in the town, and the deaths among the population were far above the average, especially

among the children and old people, owing to the different mode of life lived and the scarcity of milk and ghee, which form the great staples of food.

Regarding what was being done outside, our influence was losing ground every day owing to our having no policy, and the influence of Mahdism, with its leader, Osman Digna, was getting greater, and the new town of Tamaai was growing larger and larger every week. Cassala was the only place in the Soudan that still held out, and there was no chance of its ever being relieved. The English were doing nothing except sitting tight in Suakim. Our allies, the Italians, who had been let into Massowah to help us, were doing nothing, and had done nothing since their arrival there, and the only two of the whole Soudan garrisons that had been relieved were those that had been got out by King John, namely, those of Geera and Gallabat. The former was a small station on the banks of the river Setite, that held the ford on the road from Cassala. The roads from Geera branch off on the south side of the Setite to Gedarif and Taka, and Metemneh or Gallabat. Gallabat was what might be called the Egyptian garrison on the Western Abyssinian frontier, and is one of the most important market towns in the Eastern Soudan. In the market, which was held at given times in the year, generally in the dry season, all the best qualities of Soudan, Abyssinian, and Galla produce was for sale and barter, and the majority of the gold, ivory, musk, and beeswax produced in Abyssinia and the Galla districts changed hands here. The market was also celebrated for the female Galla slaves, so famed for their beauty, that used to be for sale here, and there is hardly a harem in the Soudan or in Arabia that has not some Abyssinian or Galla slave that has been to Gallabat. Many of the Egyptian officers

purchased their wives here, and there is many a child in Egypt whose mother came from the slave market in Gallabat. General Gordon on many occasions tried to put it down, but without a European Governor it would have been impossible, as, although the slave market was nominally closed, the business used to go on in private houses. There used to be quite a business made of decoying pure-bred Abyssinian women to Gallabat, where they were told they could make plenty of money by immoral purposes. Once being got there, they were regularly sold to the slave dealers, and, of course, never saw their native country again. This business was not altogether confined to Gallabat, as it used to take place on a small extent at the environs of Massowah. The women, of course, never having been to Massowah, did not know their way, and their companions used to take them to Harkeeko and Emberemie instead, and get rid of them there. No questions were asked at these places how the women had been got hold of, and there were none of their countrywomen whom they could appeal to, like in Hotumloo, Moucollou, and Massowah, where there are many Abyssinian women of easy virtue that do a good trade, save money, and ultimately return to their country, and are immediately married and lead a good life.

At Gallabat there is a very large colony of Tacroories or the inhabitants of Western Africa. They are under Sheik Saleh Bey, who has been true to the Government throughout, and is, from all accounts, a very superior sort of a person. It is most curious this colony of Western African Mahommedans. They come from Bournu, Sokota, and other districts. From the Niger watershed they travel across Africa to make their pilgrimage to Mecca, and are often three or four years *en route*. They have no transport animals

with them ; do the whole distance on foot ; live by charity or on what they can snare and shoot with their bows and arrows, with which all the men are armed. No work seems to be too menial for them to perform ; they are hard working and industrious, courageous, and at the same time quite peaceful, and one never hears of them creating a disturbance. After finishing their pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina they return to Suakim and walk back to their countries, some few returning after, perhaps, seven or eight years' absence. No other Mahommedans in the world, or I may say persons of other sects, go through what they do for their religion, and I know of no more orderly or well-behaved people. The colony at Gallabat found their way there through Cassala on their return from the pilgrimage, and it is a pity that the Government never tried to settle more of them down and encourage them to take up cultivating, as they would have made a splendid element in the fertile districts of the Tokar delta and Taka. They have not been led away by the teachings of Mahdism as might be expected from their orderly character. Very few of them read or write, and they obey Sheik Saleh Bey in everything he tells them to do. During the last two seasons, 1884-85, we have had many of these Stanleys and Camerons with their wives and children that have found their way in from Berber, and they have always been most ready to give any information they had as to the movements of the dervishes. It is a pity that some rich Mahommedan has not astonished them by sending them back by sea through the Canal to the west coast of Africa, as some of them live within easy distance of the coast, and it would astonish them and show them something of the world by their being able to get back to their homes in three or four moons. These people have absolutely no money with



them when they leave their countries and earn enough *en route* to buy a few things. Their clothes consist of native-made cotton cloth called "damer." A few gourds and water-skins and a small iron plate or two are their only utensils. Their arms consist of native knives, lances, and bows and arrows. They eat lizards, ants, roots, and anything they can get hold of.

They make good fighting men, are very clannish, and stick together when they are ill-treated, and seem very fond of their wives and children.

It was only in the autumn of 1885 that an expiring effort was made by our Government to get Cassala relieved. King John had asked permission to do so the year before, but was told to wait, to see what became, I suppose, of Khartoum and poor General Gordon. Now, when it was nearly an impossibility to help Cassala, he was asked to relieve it at all hazards; this when the rivers were in flood, and the only army under arms that of Ras Aloula in the north. Not a finger had the Italians lifted to help put down Mahdism, and not one thing had the English done to try and carry out their treaty obligations to the Abyssinians. King John, in all good faith, gave Ras Aloula orders to go down and see what he could do, and it resulted in the bloody fight of Kufit in the Taka province, on the road from Sanheit or Keren to Cassala.

There have been no true accounts of this fight, nor will there be until Ras Aloula has been asked to give his version of the affair and what can be gathered from people who took part in it on the Abyssinian side. It is certain that there never will be an account of it from the dervishes, as hardly any of them got away. The engagement, from all accounts, took place in a large valley surrounded by highish

hills, the bed of the valley being thickly studded with mimosa bush, much like the scrub round Suakim, which is very much like all other parts of the Soudan I have seen. Bellata Gabrou commanded the cavalry, and Ras Aloula was in supreme command, and was with the foot soldiers. The fight commenced with the cavalry being surrounded and cut off in the bush from the infantry, and they suffered terribly, Bellata Gabrou being killed, our old friend that was the first to welcome Admiral Hewett's mission at Ginda on arrival on Abyssinian territory, with many other minor chiefs. The cavalry could not cut their way back through the dervishes, and had to go on up the valley, defeated. Then Ras Aloula arrived with the infantry, and, after a most stubborn fight, entirely defeated the dervishes, who, in their turn, had to retire, and were then taken between the two forces, as the remains of the cavalry had time to collect and reform. It ended in the dervishes being entirely annihilated, and very few of them escaped. The Abyssinians say they lost about a fourth of their force, killed or hors de combat, and that they had some 25,000 men in action. The dervishes, one might say, were annihilated, and their loss can be estimated at at least 10,000 men. This gives the sum total of about 16,000 men killed during the fight, and for what good? Cassala had surrendered about a week before, after they had been completely starved out. Here no massacre took place, a sure sign as it has been with several of the garrisons that they were a deal more friendly with the dervishes than they were given credit for, and all those that were inhabitants of the country and had property to lose were perfectly willing to enter into relations with the Mahdi now he was the paramount power in the

sudan, and that they had no further interest for the time being either in the English or the Egyptians.

Kufit was without doubt the most bloody of all the fights that have taken place in the Soudan, and I doubt whether nearly the number that died that afternoon were killed at the sacking of Khartoum. There might have been more killed at Melbeis in the three days' fighting, when Hicks was killed, but certainly not so many in such a short time.

Usually, no move of policy took place after this slaughter, the further placing of pawns and pieces in this game of chess with the Mahdi; it was another exchange of pieces which could further no interests or help bring about the finish of the game. I am not certain if anyone ever said thanks to King John for what he had done, certainly we never took any steps to carry out our treaty obligations to him, but left him more alone than ever, and to the tender mercies of Italian intrigue. It was well known that England was a party to Italy going to Massowah, and I should very much like to know the arrangements by which they went there, and if it was on the understanding that they were to carry out our obligations to King John. In no Blue Book has anything been printed about how we behaved to King John. Was he written to, and told that the Government was much obliged to him for the civilized way in which he had carried out his part of the treaty, but that it was now very inconvenient to us to fulfil ours, and we begged him to have nothing more to do with him; in fact, we had broken up the treaty? If this had been done it would have been a great deal more straightforward and honest than the way we behaved. It is a mercy that King John and the majority of his subjects know the difference between mer-

chants who keep their bond, sportsmen and gentlemen who go into his country for amusement, and those that are responsible for the actions of the Government at home, and who do what is called pull the wires.

The 1868 campaign was due to neglect on behalf of the home authorities more than anything else, and the next Englishmen who get illtreated or killed in the country will have to thank those that did nothing to carry out Admiral Hewett's treaty. Honourable English gentlemen are employed to make a treaty which they do, thinking their Government are going to carry out the professions they make, and should those gentlemen ever return to the country they have helped deceive it might go hard with them. The Government ought to keep a certain class of persons to be employed only when a bogus treaty is required to be made, and not risk the lives and reputations of their officers. By keeping poor Bacheet Bey, the sheik of the Beni-Amer tribe, waiting at Massowah so long for an answer, he lost all touch of what was going on in his tribe, and on his return to them he fell into an ambush and was killed, which would not have taken place had he not been hurried back in haste before he could get his followers together when he received his instructions. By far the most sensible man of the whole Eastern Soudan sheiks is Seyed Abou Fatma, of the Khor Barca Ashrufs. He is entirely neutral, and neither takes one side nor the other, and is thankful for small mercies, namely, that he has to pay no more taxes. Being a direct descendant of the prophet, one would have thought that he and his tribe should not have been taxed but rather subsidized, as their religious influence always plays an important part in the politics of Mahomedan countries, and especially in the Soudan, where they are so greatly venerated, but

nothing is too sacred or too poor for the Egyptian tax-collector to get hold of ; if it is possible to tax a thing they will do so, and if there was a market for Soudan human hair they would take that in preference to nothing at all. The year 1885 closing in has left us nothing to be proud of, unlimited bloodshed there has been, of broken promises not few, and there can be no doubt that we are worse off at the close of the year than we were at the commencement, both as regards our position and our reputation. Khartoum is gone, and every other Soudan centre of trade as well, and from the equatorial provinces nothing is known except that Emin Bey has not given up. No one has helped him ; he is left to his own resources.

Having seen so much of the English work in the Soudan, I cannot say that I am greatly taken with it. There have been good and capable men employed, good advice has been given to the Government, but it has been neglected, and no one seems to know who it is that is responsible for the working of affairs. Some day, I suppose, it will be known, and the reasons there have been for acting in the way they have done. I cannot say there has been very much of a policy shown, and I do not know that history can duplicate such a lamentable state of affairs ; one thing is certain, that the officers in charge of affairs in the Eastern Soudan are not responsible for what has taken place, nor have I come across one official who thinks that the Government have done their duty. I think it has had a very bad effect on our Indian troops, keeping them caged up in Suakim, as in India it would have been impossible to have allowed a small band of natives to have held a large force in check so long, and India certainly was never won by such a policy. There can be no question that the home authorities do not

know how to deal with the problem they have before them, and are frightened of further complicating themselves, while their path of duty is so plain.

It was most interesting watching Soudan events at Jeddah, and getting the news from the slave traders that came over to dispose of their slaves in the Hedjaz. There is no doubt that there has been a perfect system of communication kept up between the dervishes and the slave dealers in the Soudan with the friends on the Arabian side, and that although Suakim was blockaded the slaves came down uninterruptedly by the old slave routes that have been opened for centuries, those routes being unknown to the Egyptian authorities in the Soudan, and unexplored by Europeans. One may say absolutely nothing is known of the Soudan off the beaten tracks, and whether there is fertile country or desert, whether the population is large or small, how that population lives, and where they live. It has been certainly proved that they can put more fighting men into the field than was expected.

I had several chances when at Jeddah in the autumn of seeing representatives of some of the Bishareen, Amarar, and Hadendowie tribes who had come over for various reasons, some to perform their pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, and others to buy and sell produce, and I was astonished what a brisk trade was being done with the opposite side. I found that very few of the before-mentioned tribes were really engaged in the slave trade. Some few of them that had been formerly engaged in trade through Suakim with resident Suakim and Jeddah merchants went in for purchasing slaves from the dealers whenever they had a chance, the same as a man at home will speculate in cattle, but the majority of the business with

up country was done by the Jaleen and Dongolowie inhabitants ; the latter are by far the most difficult problem to deal with in the Soudan ; they are everywhere. The good people of Egypt who have Berbereen servants have seen them, and there can be no doubt that when in civilized countries they make good servants. They are the Germans of the Soudan, and have migrated to all parts of the Soudan and Egypt ; Syria and Arabia are not free from them, and there has been a grave error made by the authorities who have been responsible for fixing the frontier at Wady Halfa instead of the confines of the Dongola province. They would make good subjects under a just Government, and men that could be depended upon ; but when left to their own resources they are not particular by what means they gain their livelihood, and the excitement of slave-catching and its concomitant debauchery has a great hold on them. The lives of many of the Berbereens and Dongolowies in the Soudan are not dissimilar to our "Jack Shepherds" and "Dick Turpins," and there is a certain romance about their mode of life suitable to the "Penny Dreadful" order of literature, and no doubt volumes might be filled of the adventures of, say, Suleiman the Strong Arm, the curse of the desert, or Abou Fatma, the one-eyed son of Mahomet, the Robber Chieftain of the Soudan.

One thing I was greatly struck with in Jeddah, the utter apathy of the Turk to the lesson that had been taught the Egyptians on the opposite coast, and they were making no attempt to put their house in order ; the element of rebellion was there among the middle-class, but the inhabitants of the desert are so few compared to the opposite coast. Were they more numerous they would certainly be a great danger to Turkish rule, and what keeps the Hedjaz quiet is the yearly

pilgrimage, whereby the minds of the people are kept diverted from thinking of the hardships they have to endure at the hands of the Turks. Should a series of pilgrimages fail on account of war or a prolonged epidemic in the East the whole of the Hedjaz would be in revolt, and it would perhaps be a difficult thing for Turkey to reconquer the country. The opening of the Canal and the increased facilities of communication have enlightened the inhabitants of the country, and they have, no doubt, advanced in ratio more than the Turks have done, and there is one centre in Arabia that even the Bedouins know and talk about, namely Aden, the influence of which is spreading far and wide throughout Arabia, and I have heard the question of the two Governments, viz., Arabs under Aden rule, and Arabs under Turkish rule, discussed, always to the detriment of the latter. It seems a pity, all things considered, that the Soudan question was not left to the Indian Government to settle on the basis of dealing with the tribes like they are dealt with round Aden. If it had been done we should not have been in the state we now are.

My stay in Jeddah gave me a more hopeful chance of being able on my return to Suakim to get into communication with those tribes outside the influence of Suakim politics, and being able to get a combination together of sheiks that had little or nothing to do with Mahdism, and that owed no allegiance, one may say, to the Egyptian Government. They were nominally under Egyptian rule, but Egypt had done nothing for them, officials had never visited their districts, and no white man had ever travelled through their country. Some of the sheiks had been to Suakim, others had not; some had seen Egyptian officials at Singat, but as for the officials knowing anything of their



country, they had as much idea about it as they had of Australia. Take any map of the Eastern Soudan, and examine the country from Cape Elba or Berenice, draw a line to the Nile in the same latitude, take a line from Suakim to Berber, what is marked on the map, except the names of certain villages between Berber and Abou Hammed, the desert road from Abou Hammed to Korosko, with its well, Murad. This enormous district is not known. Then take, again, south of the Berber-Suakim road as the base and the apex of the triangle formed by Cassala. What is known of this district and its inhabitants? Simply nothing. Sir Samuel Baker has been along the banks of the Atbara to Filik, and he has published but meagre notes of his journey, and he went along the road at the end of the dry season when the Atbara was not in flood, so could know nothing of the capabilities of the district to produce crops in the wet season. This belt of country is inhabited by three great tribes, the Hadendowie, Amarar, and Bishareen. With a policy it would be an easy task to keep these people together, as the small sub-tribes follow the lead of the big tribes, and there is not that cohesion amongst them as there is among the larger tribes. Outside this triangle we have on the sea side the Beni Amer and Habab tribes, which will never give any trouble if properly governed; and on the Nile side the Shukeriyeh tribe, the great Soudan carriers, who can only prosper when trade is going on, and although a truculent set of churls in one way, are not as bad as they look, and have true commercial instincts; then the riverain population, which are always for peace and against a pastoral and nomad life. The problem I set myself to work out was how to get hold of the representatives of these tribes, find out what they wanted, what they were willing to do, and

what remedy there was for the two diseases they were suffering from, viz., discontent and Mahdism. The former was an easy thing to cure as long as the English Government did not try to reforce the Egyptian and his rule down their throats. This they had promised not to do, nor was there the least signs of their attempting to do so. So the coast was clear for private enterprise, untrammelled by Government restrictions. The latter was a more difficult question, as it meant sounding the people as to their belief and their religion, always a delicate question for a Christian to discuss with Mahommedans, and especially after the former had been butchering the latter by thousands. I did not attempt to discuss this point with them at first, but left it to some of my friends who were Seyeds, and claimed to be direct descendants of the prophet, either from Mecca or Medina, and as soon as I found the road clear broached the subject myself to them. All that I heard in Jeddah confirmed what I thought was the case, viz., that the religious part of the insurrection was at first the weaker of the two, but those that had worked the religious element had become the paramount power, and now all who had joined from discontent of the rule had outwardly to conform to their present rulers, but would only be too glad to leave them and follow anyone who could show them a way out of their dilemma so long as it was not back into the hands of the Egyptian rule. All the intelligent men that I met argued in this way: The Soudan was badly governed; then Gordon Pasha came and taught us what good government was, and that we had our rights, and were at least equal to the Egyptians; he settled us down and we were prospering. Then he left us, and the Egyptian rule, with all its injustice, came back; we were retaxed in an im-

proper manner, and we revolted. What we require is any form of government that will leave our tribal customs alone and allow trade to go on. We have no ill-feeling against the English; we fought them and were defeated; they gave us good advice when they first came, asking us to help them; and had they only told us what they were going to do, we might have been able to arrange with them. It has been bad for both of us, as now Mahdism is the strongest power in the Soudan, and no sheik can work against it alone. It is possible for you to get the sheiks together, as you have ships and money; but not any of us can do it by ourselves. How are we in the north to get to the south? and how are those in the south to get to us unless by sea? The English in their steamers can go as far in one day as we can in ten; and if the dervishes come on the coast, and a steamer can follow them, they would have no chance against us. I was asked to come and visit the Amarars and Bishareen in the north, and I knew that I could get the Hadendowies to leave Mahdism if I could bring about a *modus vivendi* between them and the northern tribes and find them something to do, or some employment, which would turn their attention from fighting. The Tokar question would be rather more difficult to deal with, and the only way I could see to settle it was by getting the tribes north and south of the Delta friendly and supply them with grain and provisions by opening them markets, so that they need not be dependent on the fertile country in the delta for their supplies. With cheap freights and low prices in India, grain could be imported and sold at a profit at a price that these tribes could afford to pay; and it was easy enough to bring about the old system of trade that existed before the war, when the

tribes had faith in the merchants and were satisfied to put down their ground in cotton instead of in grain.

These disturbances in the Soudan never arose between tribesman and merchant, and had the latter been allowed to use their undoubted influence with the tribesmen there is no doubt that the latter would have kept much quieter and been more likely to have listened to those that they knew, and had been doing business with, than to the military officials, who neither understood nor cared to treat with what they considered as a party of rebels. The Tokar delta tribes are a mixed lot, and their origin up till now is uncertain; and there is no one who has thoroughly studied where they originally came from. They are no doubt partly Beni Amer and partly Hadendowie intermarried with the settlers that came from the Arabian coast and the Hadramut country, and are the same to look at as the Dignië family, who were originally Arnaouts from Constantinople, and have lost all trace of their former origin, and are true fuzzy-wigs to look at. The whole tribes of the Tokar delta are few in numbers compared to the Amarars and Hadendowies, and their great losses sustained in the late war have drawn the remainder of them closer together, and it is very likely before many years are out that they will have intermarried so much that it will be difficult for them even to know where one of their tribes end and the other commences. The neighbouring big tribes round the delta all own land in the delta, and it does not belong altogether to the Tokar tribes, who only claim part of the land.

The end of the disturbances in the Eastern Soudan will commence when the inhabitants of Tokar and the surrounding tribes commence to grow cotton again and get their supplies of food, instead of growing it, from the merchants.

It is a question of mutual confidence, and that confidence the Egyptian Government and the military element can never give, nor is it to the interest of the latter to allow it.

I think, what with my former experience of the Soudan, that I returned from Jeddah to Suakin thoroughly understanding what was required by the Soudanese, and convinced that, with impartiality and firmness, the Eastern Soudan question presented no difficulties of settlement so long as it was undertaken by people who would be only too glad to meet the tribes half-way; that it was possible to get them to join together against Mahdism, and it was hopeless ever expecting them to allow the Egyptian Government back. They would make friendly neighbours, and would not attack Egypt if left alone; and that Egypt did not require any large force to watch them; and that as soon as trade was opened up the tribesmen would be only too glad to protect their trade against the dervishes without any help from the outside world. Before the close of 1885 I had commenced correspondence with the northern people, and I could see there would be no difficulty whatever in clearing the north of dervishes; and that after Sheik Barghut, about thirty miles to the north, was passed, the roads to Berber from the coast might be used, as they were entirely through the Ammar country. What these roads were like then I had no idea about; but I knew that they were made use of by the Jeddah slave-dealers, and that a trade had been going on for some time along them.

What struck me was how little was being done by the Government, and how little they used their undoubted sources of information. At Jeddah the Consul knew simply nothing of what was going on in the Soudan, and the Soudanese had a regular system whereby they obtained any

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information they required. The way the Indian agencies are conducted is far superior to our Consulates, and had there been an intelligent Indian officer at Jeddah he would have been able to procure a great deal of valuable information for our Intelligence Department, and have kept a watch on the Mahdi's emissaries, who were all over the Hedjaz. There can be no doubt that there was much sympathy for the Mahdi's movement in Arabia, and that many of the Arabs, especially those that dealt in slaves, were altogether in favour of the rebellion. I think the Turkish officials might have helped the Egyptian Government materially with information had they been so inclined, and might have arrested every follower and agent of the Mahdi that visited Jeddah and Mecca, as they were nearly all known to me by name, and the houses they lived in and the *cafés* they used to meet in every day, but not a hand stir did the Turks move to help the Egyptians. Talk of Turkish rights in the Soudan, their whole sympathy seems to have been on the side of the rebels, as they absolutely made no attempt to put a stop to the contraband trade that went on, and only prohibited produce from leaving Jeddah by steamer to Suakim. If anything, they threw every obstacle in the way of the Egyptians and their allies the English obtaining supplies; absolutely prohibited the exportation of fruit, vegetables, sheep, chickens, and other little necessities which would have been so acceptable to the sick and wounded; and the only reason they gave was that they required the supplies themselves. They never took into consideration that the extra demand would make an extra supply, and when asked they would not allow any extra ground to be cultivated for vegetables. I may say tons of vegetables and fruit might have been sent across, and an

quantity of good fat sheep, whereby the people of Jeddah would have been enriched. Not only in regard to supplies did they prohibit them from leaving, but the coolies and labourers as well, and many of them were put into prison for accepting employment in Suakim.

The Turks could not have behaved worse to the Egyptians and English had they tried, and their whole behaviour was not what could have been expected, especially as the Egyptians are supposed to be their vassals. Their energies might well have taken the shape of prevention of contraband, and hundreds of tons of grain, dates, and bales of Manchester cloth were shipped off from Jeddah harbour to the dervishes without the Turks attempting to stop the boats that they must have known were destined for the opposite coast. Not a slave did they confiscate, nor did they attempt to release the prisoners taken at Khartoum and Berber, that were brought over to Jeddah and sold as slaves. Moslems selling Moslems. The enemies of Egypt selling Egyptian subjects in Turkish territory. The time may come when some fat pasha is taken and sold as a slave, and do a hard day's work for a change. I hope he will enjoy it, and thoroughly appreciate the benefits of the slave trade.

I soon got into communication with the people outside Suakim on my return, and I could see every chance of being able to do some good as soon as the English Government made up their minds what they intended to do. It was certain that the Indian troops would not be left much longer at Suakim, and the constant change of Governor-Generals prevented anything serious being carried on. Since December, 1883, that is to say in two years, we have had the following officials all having a turn at governing

and managing the Soudan mess, and it must be patent to everyone that so many changes cannot be good for the country or for the people, and must tend to confusion and want of confidence. In December, 1883, it was Suleiman Pasha Niazi, then Baker Pasha, Admiral Hewett, Sir Cromer Ashburnham, Colonel Chermside, General Fremantle, General Hudson. The entire collapse of Egyptian power came under Baker Pasha's rule, but not through his fault; then abandonment under Admiral Hewett, and when he left there was a decided change for the better under his rule. Colonel Chermside had, perhaps, the hardest work of all, and he certainly did everything in his power to keep some adhesion together amongst the tribes, but he was working a policy which never can succeed in the Soudan, and as a purely Egyptian official. I believe that had he been able to have doffed the Egyptian tarbush and worked a policy of pacification and abandonment, that he would have met with success, as he was much liked by the natives, and had latterly the support of all the Europeans. Personally, I was very sorry when he left, and I considered him most energetic, and I regret to say there were many things he suggested, I believe, that were not carried out. Certainly, during the last part of his appointment there had been a great change in the feelings of the natives outside, and it was he that made the first foundations of the move against Mahdism, which only wanted carrying on to have driven it back to the interior of the Soudan, where, sooner or later, it will die out. Although at the present moment it claims to have the whole of the Soudan under its sway, with the exception of the Equatorial Provinces, Gallabat, and the environs of Massowah and Sanheit, Mahdism can only have a temporary success in the Soudan on its present basis. If the successor of Mahome



Achmet, the Mahdi, Abdullahai, can only change its teachings so as to allow of trade being opened up and intercourse with Europeans, he may be able to start a new Soudan on new lines ; but this is most unlikely, and a reaction will set in against him before long. The downfall of Mahdism will be speedy when it does commence, and it will fall by its own teachings, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness. What will take its place is the question, and who will be the rulers of the Soudan? There can be no doubt a European nation, and everything points to there being only one country that is capable of developing its resources. The military man will have very little to do with its final pacification; it will be done by trade, and by the tribes themselves.

By the spring of 1886 the Indian and English troops had entirely cleared out, and Suakim was again garrisoned by a purely Egyptian force in English pay. There had been again another quick change of Governor-Generals—General, now Sir John, Hudson having been succeeded by General Dixon, Sir Charles Warren, and General Hodding, and again by Major Watson of the Royal Engineers, a Pasha in the Egyptian service who had had the greater part of the management of the Soudan affairs in Cairo. The Indian General's term of office had been so short that they do not call for much comment, as their rule was uneventful, and the enemy did not show much activity, although towards the end of spring, 1886, in the month of March, there can be no doubt that Osman Digna had the largest population ever got together at Tamaai, and the great extent that his town, composed of mat huts, covered, could be seen by the aid of a good glass from the tops of the houses at Suakim. Among the population at Tamaai were representatives of every

tribe and sub-tribe of the Eastern Soudan, what there never had been before.

There is no doubt that Sir Charles Warren's term of office was unique, and the good that he accomplished during his short sojourn at Suakim was immense. His policy was just that that was suited to the country. In him the natives found their master, favouritism was unknown; they were all equal, and no man was too humble to be utilized. The natives at once saw that with a master spirit like that of Sir Charles Warren at work, they were perforce obliged to obey, and they did so, and at once took heart, and saw that the best way to get on was to drop Mahdism and try to make a better state of things outside. There can be no doubt that in a few months with Sir Charles Warren at the head of affairs there would have been a settlement once and for all of the Eastern Soudan question; unfortunately, both for Europeans and natives, and I may say for humanity, his stay was so short that we could not reap the benefits of his wise and brilliant policy. 'Twas he who planted the seed of self-help among the tribes, and taught the Europeans that they could all aid in pacification if they wished; that he was open to hear what everyone had to say, and there was no question, no matter how trivial, but they had his permission to claim an interview. To work for him was a pleasure, and he had also that winning way of General Gordon's that made him so popular with everyone. In consequence he got thoroughly well served, and in his turn he always gave credit to anyone from whom he picked up a notion, and did not after gaining valuable information from anyone say, "Oh! do you think so?" or "Dear me, I knew all that before," like other people have done. There was nothing petty or nothing mean about his work, and it was conducted

in a quiet and gentlemanly manner; he made you understand, however, that he was the master, that it was your duty to help him, but, at the same time, he was indebted to you for any help rendered. It was not to be wondered at that he got on, made everyone thoroughly at home, and left a most pleasing memory behind of what capable officials can do when they try. I have no hesitation in saying his loss to Suakim was irreparable, and had he had the management a little longer there would have been a settlement of the question, and the Soudan opened up again to British and foreign enterprise. Soon after Sir Charles Warren's departure the whole of the English forces left, and Suakim was again given back to Cairo influences, and as long as Sir Charles Warren's successor (Major Watson) was left with a free hand, he not only carried out his predecessor's policy, but developed his own policy, and the northern tribes immediately gave up Mahdism and threw in their lot with those of the merchants and the party that required order and tranquillity.

I have said before that comparisons are odious, and that the general public will not believe, and our Government bureaucracy as well, that it all depends on what sort of a tool is used to get through the work of leaving a policy behind. The policy is a species of monument, and shows good and bad work, according to the artists employed. Sir Charles Warren and Major Watson have been the only two that have put any artistic touches on the structure; the ones that preceded them knocked off some of the rough edges and got the crude mass in shape for carving, and since the departure of Major Watson the only thing that seems to have been done is that everything that the former artists did has been wrong, and everything that they got into order

must be rectified. It has ended in the destruction of all artistic merit, the breaking of the Elgin marbles is about on a par with what is now being done, and it only shows the work of a Goth or a Vandal brought up in the worst of Turkish schools. Where is the blame to be attached, and who is responsible?

I want it to be particularly understood that the whole of the working of the pacification of the north and north-eastern part of the Soudan was entirely a joint affair carried on by mutual good faith of all parties concerned, and that there can be no doubt that the eighteen months' warfare had taught the Arabs this lesson—that they never could expect to make headway against the English, although they had no fear of the Turk or Egyptian; that it was to their interest to put an end to all disturbances in their districts, and as soon as the hand of friendship was opened to them, mind that hand being one that represented a policy of leaving them alone and having no wish to regovern them. They soon settled down into a quiet and peaceful life, willing to trade or barter, protect the lives of those that visited them, and offer their usual desert hospitalities—a hospitality not to be judged by the pecuniary sacrifice made, but what they could afford, and putting the Christian on the same footing as their own sheiks and elders.

It may have to be written some day the whole details of the breaking up of Mahdism and the pacification of the Soudan, but it is impossible for me to deal with the subject and to do the question justice in this book as it wants, introducing the reader to all the tribes of the Soudan, and to go in for details and the arguments why such a tribe should settle down and another not. It is impossible for one department at home, or for the resident Minister in Egypt, ever to

be able to deal with the question, as they have not the time, with their many other duties to carry out, to do justice to the subject. They might direct the policy, but they could not work it, as they have not the local experience; and it is very exceptional to find men that can deal with the question like Sir Charles Warren did.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AMONG THE NORTHERN TRIBES.

ON my first visit to the Roweyah district, some 120 miles north of Suakim, where I had been given permission to go by Major Watson, who perfectly agreed in my policy of pacification, I found the following state of affairs:—A brisk trade going on with the Jeddah slave-dealers; an unchecked traffic in slaves, mostly prisoners of war, from Omdurman and the Nile Valley *via* the Bishareen and upper Amara roads to the sea coast, where they were shipped into Jeddah dhows and landed in the neighbourhood of Jeddah. The inhabitants of the coast and interior had been entirely dependent on the Jeddah slave-dealers for their supplies owing to the blockade from Suakim and the prohibition of all commercial intercourse with the outside tribes. Not only was the slave trade going on, but Osman Digna and the dervishes were drawing all their supplies from Jeddah *via* the group of northern harbours from Roweyah to Halaib, and even a brisk trade in dates and grain was being carried on with the Turkish ports of Yembo and the Egyptian port of Cosseir. The dervishes had a regular market and bazaar at Shinab, just north of Roweyah. At some ten miles from Roweyah

in the Yemena Valley at Hardi, the dervish Ameer, O'Nur Magië, with his followers, had their headquarters; and there was another force belonging to the dervishes, under a cousin and nephew of Osman Digna, Mahomed Medani, working their way up the coast-plain from Tamaai to the north. The majority of these dervishes were local tribesmen, and not what may be called foreigners, from the Nile Valley, Dongalowie, and tribesmen from Darfur and Kordofan.

I landed at one or two places on the coast and saw some sheiks I had been in communication with, and I must say that it was rather nervous work for the first few minutes, being surrounded by a lot of fully-armed dervishes dressed in the Mahdi's uniform. After a little conversation I was perfectly at my ease, and I could see that the tribesmen were only too glad to drop Mahdism and return to their old mode of living. They were promised that the port of Roweyah should be opened for them, the salterns again worked if they would only turn out the dervishes. To this they agreed; and with a few fair words on each side the first difficulty was overcome. Right loyally did the tribesmen fulfil their promises; in less than a month the whole of the coast from Roweyah to Suakim was free from dervishes. O'Nur Magië was surrounded, his followers among the tribesmen deserted him, and he was taken prisoner and handed over to the Egyptian authorities, brought to Suakim, and died about a month afterwards of small-pox.

The force under Mahomed Medani reached Khor Gara Era, the southern-boundary of the Zakenhelt desert, about half-way to Roweyah, and encamped at Bir Ait, about three miles from the coast. This they soon found untenable, and marched inland for four hours up the Khor Gara Era to Bir Elief, where there is better water and a stronger position.

Small-pox broke out among the force, their provisions came to an end; they could at last not get forward across the Zakenhelt desert, and it was with difficulty they could move out of their camp in small numbers, as they were attacked and cut off by the tribesmen, all of whom were Amarars, backed up by the Ashrufs from Khor Haiet district. A retreat was decided on. The only place where they could get water in any quantity was at Sheik Barghut, as the wells at Duroor were held by friendly tribes, and the outside wells further up the Khor Arbat had been filled up. The dervishes retired to Sheik Barghut an utterly demoralized force, where they were attacked by Mahomed Ali's sons and the friendly Arabs in the pay of the Egyptians, and utterly defeated and their leader slain. This left the north nearly free, and Osman Digna's most forward point was at Hasheem. The news of the tribesmen's successes against Mahdism spread like wildfire throughout the district, and Osman Digna's power as the leader of Mahdism commenced to wane and his followers to disperse. So strong was his influence that those that were with him could not take the whole of their families or houses away from Tamaai; but the able-bodied men made excuses for leaving for their districts on business, leaving their women and children behind. The large population left, instead of being a source of strength to Osman Digna, were composed chiefly of old men, old women, and little children. Of course Osman Digna could not say much to the men that left, as they, having left their houses and families behind, it was some hold over them, and it was a sure sign that the tribesmen would return sooner or later. The force at Hasheem kept about the same, and it was commanded by Mahomed Adam Sadoun, one of the most fanatical and influential of the neighbouring



sheiks, his tribe being a sort of connecting link between the Hadendowies and Amarars ; but nominally it was a purely Amarar tribe, and Mahomed Adam Sadoun owed allegiance to Hamed Mahmoud, who was with Osman Digna at Tamaai. Hamed Mahmoud is the Sultan of the Amarars, belongs to the Moosayab tribe, whose headquarters are at Ariab, the most western point of the Amarar tribe.

This brought the state of affairs up to the middle of August. Before this, from the end of June, I had been living on shore at Mahomed Ghoul in the Roweyah district, riding about the country seeing the Arabs, sending messengers into the interior, trying to get into communication with old friends of mine that I knew were friendly still, although they were nominally leaders of Mahdism. I got great help from the Ashrufs, to whom I am well known, and I tried to get the Egyptian authorities to make more use of them than they did. However, in a short time I saw how impossible it was for the natives outside ever to work or do good with the wretched and contemptible Suakim clique, whose interests are entirely against those of the tribesmen. To me it seems such a pity that whoever seems to be in power looks at the Soudan in a Suakim light, and must naturally, therefore, take a small and petty view of the question, by which it never can be settled. The Suakimese are quite foreigners, one may say, to the tribesmen. Mahmond Ali Bey, who is only a very minor sheik, and is the head of the small Fadlab tribe, which does not muster a hundred fighting men, is made above everyone by the Egyptian authorities, and the tribesmen will never consent to be under him. Egyptian rule and favouritism go together, and in dealing with the Soudan with what may be called its old feudal system of government among its tribes, the very

last thing that hereditary sheiks will stand is to be at the beck and call of an upstart. As far as my experience goes there is no easier people to govern than the Soudan Pastoral tribes; they want leaving alone, and are, from what I can see, always ready to take good advice. The sheiks can be entirely trusted to keep order and mete out a rough and ready justice amongst their followers which is quite enough to keep them quiet and make respectable neighbours from whom no danger need be feared. They are to be trusted, and they seem to have a high sense of honour for people so little civilized.

It was while I was on one of my trips in the district round the Zakenhelt desert that I heard of the execution of Hamd Mahmoud, head sheik of the Moosayab tribe, and Hassab, sheik of the Nurab tribe, by Osman Digna at Tamaai, his supposed summons to Omdurraman to see Abdullahai, his leaving Tamaai, and the collapse of his power. Immediately on hearing this news I asked all the sheiks that would come Mahomed Ghoul to have a talk with me to see what could be done, and hastened back to my zareba that I had made at Mahomed Ghoul. On my return there I was surprised to hear that Major Watson was to be superseded at Suakin by Colonel Kitchener, and I must say that I was sincerely sorry, as he had done very good work, and to him and General Warren had been entirely due the collapse of the rebellion and Mahdism in the North-Eastern Soudan. The sheiks on all sides agreed to the following: That they would send their men to try to take Tamaai and put an end to Mahdism in the Amara country, and that in future they would settle their disputes amongst themselves, give anyone permission to come in their country for commercial or sporting purposes, and be responsible for anyone's property who had permission to come in their territory.

Before leaving for Suakim I will give a short *résumé* of what had taken place, and the satisfactory result is entirely due to Seyed Mahomed, of the Ashrufs, who got the tribesmen together. The last dervish leader, Sheik Tetar, of the Hanterab Bishareens, had been chased out of the north to Tamaai after a good deal of trouble, and there was not a dervish left in the north. Trade in a small way was going on quite briskly at Mahomed Ghoul, and in the neighbourhood of my tent over 200 huts representing families had settled down. The Egyptian fort was not finished, and I should have felt just as safe without it, held by a small force of irregular police that did not dare to go half-a-mile away from the beach. The salterns were working, and some steamers and sailing vessels had been loaded, and a good number of people were living at Roweyah, about 12 miles across the bay from Mahomed Ghoul. I could ride out anywhere without any further escort than my camel man, and I had already made several trips out into the country and slept away from the small colony without the least fear. I now made up my mind to ride back across country to Suakim, and the sheiks said that I would not be molested and that the people would be glad to see me. I accordingly rode down across the Zakenhelt desert to Ait, in Khor Gara Era, and from there to Duroor in Khor Arbat; from Arbat to Sheik Barghut and Gezirat Abdullah, and from Gezirat Abdullah to Suakim, doing the distance by the road I came about 140 miles in three days, arriving, more strictly speaking, at Suakim on the evening of the third day. I had been everywhere well received, and got most valuable information *en route*, all of which tended to say that Tamaai could fall at any time, but it was not to the interests of the Suakim people that it should do so; that a good many people were dis-

gusted and had come away after getting their families out of Tamaai, who were at starvation point. I saw many people who had been at Tamaai, and they certainly looked very ill and thin, and quite confirmed how badly off the inhabitants of that place were for food, now that the Ashrufs and Amarars, with the help of some of the Haden-dowies, had drawn the cordon round the place. It was very jumpy work, meeting Arabs in full dervish costume in the desert, but I never had a bad word spoken to me. I exchanged greetings and hospitalities with these people, and they all seemed pleased that an Englishman placed confidence in them. I never tried to hide my nationality, never professed to be a Mahommedan, and consequently got treated in the way Englishmen generally are in this country, namely, with the best. There is no surer saying applicable to the Soudan and its people that confidence begets confidence, and mutual trust is the key-word to their better feelings.

I enjoyed the ride down the sea-coast plain immensely, had fair sport, and if I had not been riding quickly could have made a big bag. I killed *en route* enough game to keep my party going, but never got the number of gazelle that I got on one of my excursions from Mahomed Ghoul, at Fanoidig, where I managed to bag during my noon-day halt four gazelle, and wounded two others that got brought in just as I was leaving. I killed two out of the four gazelle while they were drinking the sea water, being the second occasion on which I had absolutely shot gazelle in the act of drinking salt water. I had before often heard the Arabs say that the common gazelle and the Ariel gazelle both do so, but never believed it. At Debadeb, some fifteen miles south of Mahomed Ghoul, there is a spring of perfectly salt water that bubbles out of the beach near the sea shore,

where camels, goats, donkeys, sheep, and sand-grouse all come to drink from, and I have shot over 50 grouse on many mornings at this spring, and one morning got 107 grouse in less than an hour and a half. I have no hesitation in saying that two or three good shots would get their 100 brace per gun per morning if they stuck to the work. I never could afford the cartridges—travelling light—and when I killed the 107 grouse\* I certainly did not expend more than 45 to 50 cartridges. How many birds went away and died besides I should not like to say. At these water-holes and oases in the Soudan desert I can perfectly understand the miracle of the quail (if for quail one reads sand-grouse) mentioned in the Bible, when the Israelites bolted from Egypt after looting the Egyptians. The birds must drink, and with a large force occupying a series of wells the sand-grouse could, when the heat of the day came on, be caught by the hand and knocked over by sticks, and in those days there were no guns to frighten them. My bag *en route* consisted of hare, quail, sand-grouse, gazelle, thick-knee plover, peewit, or “did you do its,” and one bustard. I took rice with me, and bought sheep wherever I camped, and invited any native that happened to be near to come to my camp to have a feed, and many an Arab had not had a square meal like I gave him for many and many a month.

At Fanoidig, where I killed the gazelle, I only kept half of the smallest for myself and gave the rest away to the natives, who immediately commenced cutting them into strips and drying the meat in the sun. This supply of meat

\* None of these birds were wasted, as although the Arabs living on shore would not eat them, the birds having died before they had their throats cut, some sailors belonging to two Arab boats, who had not seen the birds killed, but saw they had their throats cut, were very glad of them, and they asked me to their noon-day meal, which I partook of with them.

was a god-send to them, and I have no doubt that they wished I could visit them oftener. I had a most pressing invitation to return, and they told me that they would only be too glad to get up a drive for me at any time I liked to send and give them notice. I found all the Arabs in this district afterwards most willing to help me, and they all wanted me to stop and shoot gazelle, and on several occasions afterwards, although tired, I went out to shoot them a gazelle so that they might have a good feed. They infinitely prefer gazelle meat to sheep or goat.

At Duroor the first of the water had been down from the mountain drainage round Odrus; the water that runs down Khor Arbat fertilizes the land round Duroor in identically the same way, only on a small scale, as the Khor Barca does to the Tokar delta. The ground round Duroor was being got ready for dhurra cultivation, but not a drop of rain had yet fallen to make the trees and shrubs sprout, only where the inundation had swept down on its way to the sea; the grass had already come up, and everything looked green and fresh.

At Sheik Barghut I rode over the battle-field where Osman Digna's northern expedition had been defeated by the friendlies and Amarars, another horrid sight and more skulls on the ground, another mark of the awful mistake we have made with the Soudan. Just outside Sheik Barghut I saw some Kourbab people returning from Tamaai, who told me that there were very few fighting men left, and that they were quite sick of Mahdism. I chaffed them and told them they looked very thin, and I advised them to get back to their country and work at the salt pans so that they could get plenty of food and money. I gave them some tobacco which they were delighted with (as they were not allowed to

smoke at Tamaai), and sent them on their way rejoicing with enough biscuits to last them a couple of days. Here were Mahdists, that only a few days ago would, perhaps, have been only too glad to have killed a Christian, entirely friendly and accepting from him the first little kindness that they had received for months.

I met here Sheik Jibreen returning from Tamaai to bring up the rest of his men to attack the place. He told me that the place could have fallen long ago if the Suakim party had wished it, but they did not, and the tribesmen were very disgusted, and were all for leaving unless an end was made to the stronghold of Mahdism, as it was the majority of the people that they had quarrels with were allowed to escape. This I cannot but think was with the change of policy at Suakim. I would particularly mention that with the capture of O'Nur and death of Mahomed Adam Sadoun, who commanded at Hasheem, Osman Digna's power was broken. Whatever led him to commit the grave blunder of executing Iamed Mahmoud, the head sheik of the Amarars, will never be known. By doing so none of the other sheiks felt safe, and they immediately conspired for his downfall. There was absolutely no reason why all the tribes, Hadenbowie and Amarar, should not be at peace, and the natural sequence to the policy that had hitherto been carried on was the fall of Tamaai and the downfall of Mahdism.

I arrived at Suakim at the northern gate at night time : about ten o'clock. On the Gezirat Abdullah road after dusk till near the town I had met many tribesmen all round north, some in the Mahdi's uniform and some not. I never was insulted, and these men, had they wanted to kill a Christian, could easily have done so, as I only had my camelman and servant with me.

The English officer, Lieut. Campbell, of the Black Battalion, going his rounds kindly let me in through the gates, and got hauled over the coals, I believe, for doing so. I never could understand the farce of keeping a European outside the gates; they are not very common in the Soudan at present, and especially those that ride about the country; they are not so numerous inside the walls of Suakim that there would be a difficulty in finding them again, but still I suppose the military commanders must have their way, and if they let such a well-known person in the Soudan as myself in they must let every Arab through the gates that comes from the outside. It is the first time in the Soudan that I ever saw the scales of justice held evenly, and a white man treated the same as the lowest unknown black. I was glad to get something to eat, have a chat on what the world had been doing since my absence, and then to bed in a real house, which I had not slept in for some months.

I had an interview with our new Governor-General the next morning, and gave him all the news there was, and how easily it was to take Tamaai, the only drawback being that the Suakim clique did not want it to fall, as their occupation would be gone, and it would be killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. There is no doubt that for some time the so-called friendlies had looked on the Government at Suakim as a milch cow that never could run dry, and they were in no hurry to see a different state of affairs, nor did they believe that there was a possibility of the milch cow running dry. It was not till the Governor-General told them that unless Tamaai fell in three days all supplies would be cut off, that an attack was made on the small forts that commanded the central position, and the place fell. I got the credit from the town Arabs of being unfriendly to them



interests, and wanting to prevent them getting an honest living (by murder and false information), and proportionately thanked by the outside people for speaking my mind so freely.

I was not allowed by the authorities to go to Tamaai after it fell, so made my own arrangements for getting there, and arrived about thirty hours after the place had fallen, just after the Governor-General had come back from making a short inspection of the place. I rode through the bush as far as Tofrick, revisited the battle-field, which had but little changed—skulls and bones everywhere, with the old *débris* left behind just as when the English left it. A sorry sight at the best of times a battle-field, and this another example of the useless slaughter that has been carried on. The dervishes had made a dam across the last watercourse before arriving at Tofrick from Suakim so as to enable their cattle and their advanced guard from Tamaai to procure water, instead of returning every day to Hasheem or Tamaai for supplies. There is very good grazing ground just round here after the rainy season, but no permanent supply of water nearer than the places mentioned, which is a drawback to the cattle using this pasture ground. The earthwork made a pond of some five or six acres extent, and would last for perhaps a couple of months; it is astonishing how long these depressions in the ground will hold water sometimes. From Tofrick I rode through the 1884 battle-field at Tamaai, and unless I had known every inch of the ground so well before I should not have recognized it; not a bush was to be seen, every one of them had been cut down, either for firewood or for making zarebas round the native huts at Tamaai and Tamanieb. Any of my readers who were at Tamaai may remember how the ground was covered

with bush and "tabas" grass, not a vestige of which remained. The zareba where the English encamped is still plainly traceable by the decayed and worm-eaten branches that formed the slight protection which divided us from the enemy. The graves of those that fell are undisturbed, and a somewhat thicker undergrowth of grass marks where our troops were buried. What strikes one at once is what may be called the perfect sea of bones that are scattered all over the banks of the Khor, and the attacks on our position are plainly seen by the remains of the Arabs that whiten the ground. From Teselah hills one can trace the whole fight by the *débris* of human beings. I arrived at Tamaai a little before dusk, and a great deal too late to make a thorough look round. I had seen quite enough ghastly sights, however, on entering, and I shall never forget as long as I live the night I spent at Tamaai with its attending miseries. Talk about abject pictures of despair, the terrors of the infernal regions, and other horrors! I never could have imagined a more terrible sight than what was before me at Tamaai. Luckily the moonlight hid many details from the eye which were only revealed by daylight and the glare of the sun. I had a native bedstead brought me to the mosque and great meeting-place in the centre of Tamaai, where I remained the night with my friends the Ashrufs, who brought all the sheiks assembled at Tamaai to see me. Sleep was out of the question; around me the cries of wailing women lamenting the loss of their friends; little children, walking skeletons, crying for food and water; within ten yards of me a wretched little boy of about eight years old groaning and in delirium of fever, his little frame torn every now and then with a hacking cough, past all human aid. I did what I could for him, made a bed with

my sheep-skin saddle-covers, gave him some soup, and tried to make his last moments comfortable ; but in the morning he was dead, and had learnt that great secret we all shall know some day. His was only one case of many, and the night I was there eleven women and children died.

I sat up nearly the whole night talking, and not a person that I had any conversation with but said they never wished to see such misery again. It was even bad enough to move an Arab to pity, and that is saying a great deal.

There had been but little fighting; the garrison were a great deal too weak to defend themselves, and after the first rush of the attacking tribesmen, which was met with a volley from the defenders, everything was over except the cold-blooded butchery that ensued. Little or no quarter was given to the men; many women were also killed. I got about an hour's sleep just as the morning star was rising, and just as it was daylight got up and had a cup of cocoa. I managed to get through it and a biscuit before I was besieged by a crowd of wretched little children clamouring for food. I regretted that I even had taken what I did, as the sight that met my eyes was enough to move the hardest-hearted of mortals, and I felt to eat while others were suffering such torments of hunger was wrong. I tried to pick out what I thought were the weakest and youngest to give food to; but every mouthful was fought for, and if a small child got hold of a bit of bread or biscuit a bigger one would try and force it out of his mouth to eat it himself. In about twenty minutes every bit of food I had with me was gone, and if I had had a hundred times as much I could have got rid of it. As soon as others heard food was being given away they came hurrying from far and near to get their share; many of them could barely crawl they were so weak.

My food being all gone, I gave my camel food away, determined my animals, as well as I, should do twenty-four hours fast as penance for the misery around us. I luckily bought a couple of bags of grain from Mahmoud Ali's people, all they could spare, and gave that away; and after I saw it divided amongst the most needy went for a walk to see Osman Digna's great stronghold. The stench overnight had been bad enough, but in the morning, as soon as it began to get warm, it was simply sickening, and I was glad to get away from the mosque and its surrounding erections and get towards Tamanieb, where there had been no fighting, only a few people massacred.

Standing on the high ridge between Tamaai and Tamanieb one got a very good view of the enormous number of mat huts that composed Osman Digna's headquarters, and I could quite understand that in the spring he had at least 15,000 people living at Tamaai at one time, and that the number of people assembled was a source of weakness, as they had not the means of getting food, and were therefore discontented. The people that had left him to go back to the hills had left all their huts behind, and many of them I entered had not been used for some time; in many of them a few of the household goods, in the shape of pots and pans, camel saddles, etc., had been left behind, quite enough to put the dervishes off the scent and to show that the desertion was only a temporary one.

The town stretched from the old Tamaai battle-field nearly to Tamanieb, a good two and a half miles, the huts being in some places in groups, others isolated; nearly all were surrounded with zarebas, and with a healthy and determined population would have been a nasty place to take, as nearly every zareba could have been made a rallying point. There

were two markets, one on the east side and the other on the west, the latter used by people coming from the interior, and the former from Tokar and the north. Any person wanting to go from the eastern to the western market, and *vice versâ*, had to pass through the whole of the camp, and it no doubt made the visitor fully aware of the size of the place. The fortifications were round the circular depression in the centre of the position, and consisted of redoubts zatebaed with a breastwork of gum bags. Some of the bags were filled with gum, others merely with sand. There was a square stone fort, about thirty yards square, on the ridge nearest Khor Ghob, consisting of a high masonry wall, and at the east end three rooms, which were used as magazines. The yard contained the cannon taken at Cassala and brought from there; the door was protected by a semi-circular redoubt, pierced for three guns, and pointed towards the north; it was defenceless from the south, and could easily have been rushed from Khor Ghob.

Inside the fort were several dead bodies, and in the circular redoubt the body of the son of Sheik Taheer Magdub, one of the leaders of the rebellion from the commencement. I took the rosary off his neck, as he had no more use for it, as a memento of Tamaai. At the place where Sheik Hamed Mahmoud of the Moosayab tribe had been executed by Osman Digna, some twenty bodies of the rebels were lying nearly hacked to pieces. This was done by the tribesmen in revenge for the loss of their chief—blood for blood with interest. Three deep wells had been entirely filled with the bodies of those killed and massacred, and round these wells were crowds of horrid vultures with their wings spread out and their beaks open, gorged with the feast that they had been making off the protruding limbs of the slain.

I have got to loathe a vulture since 1884. I was glad to get back to the shade of the mosque erection out of the stench and heat; it was a very hot morning and not a breath of wind.

The mosque was a curious sort of shed erection of about 200 feet in length by 50 feet, the pulpit in the centre of the eastern face. On either side of it were little huts where the leading dervishes lived. The roof was thatched with mats and tabas grass and kept out the sun very well, and it was supported by twenty rows of telegraph poles about 10 feet apart. Under this shed prayers used to take place, and Osman Digna, Sheik Taheer Magdub, and other fanatics used to address the people, and all trials took place.

The mosque formed one side of a square, or rather long rectangular enclosure, the two sides being lined with huts in which the principal leaders of the movement had their quarters, and at the other side of the enclosure where the houses of Mahd Adam Sadoun, O'Nur Magie, and other important personages were. The "Common House," or where all the loot, provisions, stores, &c., were kept, was on the left of the mosque and was a large irregular zarebaed enclosure extending over about four acres. In this enclosure were two other zarebas with very thick thorn hedges which were used as prisons. These were under the care of Abdullah, a black slave, who was a tailor by profession, and used to carry on his trade at Suakim. He joined Osman Digna at the commencement of the rebellion, and was made headwarder of the prison and executioner, and his name was a terror among the tribesmen. It was he that had care of the prisoners and had to see the tortures and punishment carried out. In each of the prison zarebas were two strong posts about ten feet high to which prisoners were tied for

punishment—their hands fastened to a ring above their heads. They were left out in the sun for 24 hours without food or water. Another punishment was being tied on the ground to four stakes, face upwards. The pot in which fat was boiled to dip either the stump of the arm or end of the leg after mutilation of a member, which had been ordered by Osman Digna, was also in one of the zarebas. The hand or foot was disjointed and the stump placed in boiling fat to prevent bleeding. There are several men in Suakim, and plenty among the tribes, that have been mutilated by Osman Digna in this way, and they all recovered from the operation. The mode of decapitation practised was this—the prisoner's hands were tied behind his back, a string tied tight round the forehead and just above the ears; the victim knelt down, the assistant pulled the string pretty taut, and Abdullah struck off the head with an ordinary two-handed sword, the head flying away clear of the body from the tension of the cord round the head.

The "Common House" when I arrived had been entirely looted and the whole ground dug up in the search for treasure. What was obtained will never be known. There were some interesting bits of armour—ten suits complete of chain mail, a lot of headstalls with brass plates, copies from the antique used to protect the horses' heads from sword cuts, cotton-padded coverings for horses also used as defence, the covering going over the neck and whole body to within six inches of the ground. This protection is quite enough to prevent a disabling blow to be dealt, and the only way to place a horse *hors de combat* is to hamstring him by cutting under the covering, and this can only be done by throwing one's self on the ground. The 10th and 19th Hussars saw this manœuvre practised at El Teb, and as they were only armed

with swords they could not reach the Arabs on the ground. With a lance this becomes impossible. I did not take any of the loot with me as I did not want to be under obligation to any of the Suakim clique, and when Achmed, Mahmoud Ali Bey's son, said, "Take what loot you like," I replied, "What I want I will buy, the loot belongs to the tribes."

Before I left for Suakim many of the inhabitants of Tamaai were leaving for their homes; how many in their wretched condition ever reached their destination will be hard to say. I saw many slaves and people kept as prisoners of war, and I determined to keep my eye on them and find out what became of them. I left for Suakim in the afternoon utterly disgusted with what I had seen, and made a vow while riding home that as far as it lay in my power by my actions I would try to atone and try to get some reparation for the awful miseries that have been going on for the last three years. What poor General Gordon has said about "the hidden miseries of these countries," there has been no hidden miseries lately, they have been too palpable, I am afraid, to everyone. I don't know what others will think, to me it seemed that my visit to Tamaai, where I had been treated with the greatest respect by everyone, was only another proof that there was no ill-will between the natives and the English. There had been an attempt to assassinate Mahmoud Ali's son. I walked about the place unarmed with my native servant and a Gedaliob tribesman, who was present at the attack on Tamaai. We had a spear between three of us. I heard no curse, no bad language, received the greatest civility, and the deepest thanks for what I could do for them, which was not much, and I often think now that if these poor people show gratitude, they did to me for a few empty words of comfort that cost nothing.



The few days after the fall of Tamaai ought to have been employed forwarding a policy of general pacification, but the golden opportunities which fall so rarely to some people were let slip, and instead of being made use of they were frittered away with the absurd idea of taking Tokar. Here came in where a real practical man with large ideas might have done such noble work and dropped what no doubt is the curse of most men, self. The misery that had been carried on was not enough, the clique that are paramount in Suakim were listened to, and the lust of conquest, with its consequent monopoly and patronage, was carried on. Those tribes that had won Tamaai should have been asked to hold it as the key of the district; the next nearest place where any large gathering of natives could have assembled was Tokar. I asked that Tamaai should be held. I was told to mind my own business. Tamaai being held by the tribes was the next step towards the pacification of the Eastern Soudan; this was not what the war party required, and self would not have obtained "kudos." The two, I am afraid, go together, and belong to the gauds and vanities of this world.

In a few days we began to see the effect of abandoning Tamaai after it had been looted and burnt, and the stone fort blown up, namely, a sullen apathy at the muddling policy that was being carried on. It must not be thought for one moment that the Soudanese sheiks are a lot of naked barbarians; they have great reasoning powers, although they are not educated men, and above all they are great judges of character and individuals, and will follow anyone who treats them fairly and will listen to what is said, perhaps give no answer in return, but will never wilfully do what they know is wrong, and help, rather than oppose, a policy even of the strictest neutrality.

What one and all were disgusted with, was the partition of loot; the attacking force at Tamaai was, perhaps, 1,500, of which about 100 belonged to Mahmoud Ali—the tribesmen got about one-fifteenth, and Mahmoud Ali the balance. You can only do some things once in this world, and one of these things is to deceive tribesmen. A second time it is impossible; once break faith with them, and your power and influence is gone, and from the behaviour after the fall of Tamaai dates the impossibility of there ever being a chance of success with them another time unless a change is made. The whole latter history of the Soudan proves it to be a fact, and facts are more stubborn and solid in this country, perhaps, than they are in others.

The slaves and prisoners of war taken at Tamaai soon began to be got rid of. Some given away in the town, some sent to Egypt, some to Jeddah to be sold, and the majority of them were shipped from a harbour about eight miles north of Suakim to Jeddah. The tribesmen knew it, and I can only say it had a most deplorable effect. They said "Here are the English backing up the Egyptian," their one cry was: "You must not do slave business;" and now slaves and prisoners taken in war were being got rid of by the Suakim people. The Suakim people may make war upon us next, and it will be then our turn to be sold into slavery.

The old dodge of freeing slaves, taking out papers of liberation, shipping them as domestic slaves, landing them at Jeddah, destroying their papers, and selling them was resorted to and carried on under the guns of our men-of-war defending Suakim from those that were now being sold as slaves. This done against the protests of our Consul, and the only reply, "It is not politic to interfere with the domestic customs of the country." Well may the tribesmen say, "By

God, you Englishmen are curious people." The more one thinks over what we have done for the Soudan the angrier one gets, and how long are such things to be tolerated, and when are we to have a common-sense policy tried and strict and impartial justice carried out?

Valuable months went by without any appreciable change in the position round Suakim. Tokar was as far off falling as ever, and the whole position was entirely misunderstood. Suakim is not the key of the Eastern Soudan, but Tokar, the only place where a large fixed population can live. The Egyptians were always there on sufferance, and never had any influence except in the immediate vicinity of the fort at Tokar. It was not the Egyptians that developed the cotton planting industry there, it was the Europeans, and if they had been left to deal with the various tribesmen in the Barca Delta the rebellion would never have assumed the proportions it did.

The first attempt to organize the cotton cultivation at Tokar was made by Montaz and Ismael Eyoub Pashas. Their plan was a simple one—to send down cotton ginning machinery and presses; erect them and then take the ground by force, and make the population grow cotton for the Government. The machinery was never erected and not a pound of cotton was grown by tribesmen for the Government. Aliedeen Bey (afterwards made Pasha and killed with General Hicks) asked me to help him to develop Tokar, which I did. I told the sheiks if they would grow cotton jointly with Europeans and the Suakim merchants that they should not be taxed over eight per cent. This they agreed to, and before the war there were very large supplies of cotton coming from Tokar, with every chance of a large yearly increase, giving employment to two steam factories,

with every likelihood of more being required to keep pace with the supply. The Tokar tribes were always sending in messages to the merchants, asking when they would commence trading and cultivating again, to which there was only one reply: "We are ready: the Egyptian officials say you are rebels and they will not allow us to have any dealings with you." Rather than have anything to do with Egypt again they preferred going on growing grain, for which there was always a good market among the tribes. They could wait, and will wait, until some definite arrangement is come to, and it is agreed once and for all to leave them alone to govern themselves. If they, like the frogs in the fable, ever demand a king, it will not be one that will eat them up and prey on them, but one that will mete out justice with an even hand and help them in time of need. They neither require military to conquer them nor military to protect them; they can either cultivate or fight, and would when called on protect their friends and allies against a common enemy. Not only do the people of Suakim know this, but all the tribesmen; and the tribesmen never will combine to attack Tokar as they did Tamaai. Their sympathies are with their relations at Tokar, and no matter who it is that is sent to Suakim to take charge, he will never succeed in conquering the Delta for the Egyptians. Change the policy, make the Tokar Delta friendly, and the inhabitants of the Delta will help to pacify the Eastern Soudan; and in a month from opening communications with them there will not be a dervish in the place, and the district as safe to travel in as the north is now. It seems that the military ignore this, and know as well that someone must step in between them and the tribes to bring about the necessary preliminary negotiations. This they are not

willing to allow. They do not also take into consideration that the Baggaras, Jaleens, and Dangalas, the only fighting force that can be sent from Khartoum, are entire strangers to the country, and are, therefore, unpopular with the tribesmen of the Eastern Soudan; that they have no commissariat with them, and must, therefore, live on the tribes who have to supply them gratis with everything, this alone being enough when the tribesmen see that they do not want their help to drive back the Egyptians to get rid of them either by fair means or by force. No force that the Mahdi could send would ever be able to reconquer a united Eastern Soudan; and the whole element of discord would be removed with a new policy and a strong buffer of friendly tribes made between the headquarters of Mahdism and the sea coast.

I made a trip again north in the autumn to Roweyah, this time in a small native sailing craft, calling in at all the small boat harbours on my way up. I was shown all the places where the slaves were shipped from, some of the harbours being nearly land-locked and with a belt of thick mangrove on the sea side, behind which dhows can hide and cannot be seen from the sea. I took eight days doing the 120 miles, and although it was hard work roughing it and we had bad weather, I enjoyed the trip very much, as it gave me a good opportunity of studying the coast and getting an insight into the working of the slave trade, which is really simple, and captures are to be made without much trouble as long as information is paid for.

I found everything going on all right at Roweyah, the slavers from Jeddah still running cargoes at Halaïb and other northern ports, and the promise to the Bishareens not carried out, that a recognized market should be opened for

them. This procrastination led afterwards to the death of Lieutenant Stewart, of H.M.S. *Gannet*, killed cutting out a contraband dhow. The slavers' operations greatly interfered with trade, as they could undersell the merchants at Roweyah, as produce is cheaper at Jeddah than it is at Suakim. They could afford to run cargo at no freight; the outside time that they were coming over from Jeddah was twenty-four hours, while boats from Suakim were often a fortnight beating up, and cargo had to pay high freights. The slavers made their profit on the freight from the slaves, and if it was a slave merchant's boat he on his living cargo. The slavers from the interior, of course, wanted goods in exchange for their slaves, and were thus enabled to buy their goods from Jeddah cheaper than they could at Roweyah. By not looking out after the slave trade and opening up Halaib it pressed most heavily on the Suakim trade pioneers, and prevented them making any profits. So much for the efforts of the Egyptian authorities to encourage commerce.

When at Roweyah on a former occasion I had a most pressing invitation from Sheik Mini Hamed, of the Kourbab Sadounab tribe, to visit him in his stronghold in the Erba mountains, about thirty miles to the west of Roweyah, so I sent out to say I was coming to visit him. I had to write a letter to the head of the police, or mamoor, at Roweyah, to say he was not responsible if I was killed, which I did, and set off with my servant, a camelman, Seyed Ali, of the Ashrufs, who does the Cadi's work in the district, and a guide. The weather now was lovely, and there is a great difference in climates as soon as one gets north of the Zakenhelt desert, it being much cooler. I left Roweyah about eight in the morning, and took the short cut to the wells at Hardi, in the Yemena Valley, about nine miles off, thereby

saving a good three miles if I had taken the usual road *via* Yemena lower wells. I saw a great many gazelle *en route*, one of which I managed to bag, so as not to appear at my destination without something for the pot. The country after about four miles got lovely, the mimosas in full bloom, the grass all green and fresh, the larks and birds singing, and the butterflies and bees hovering over and settling on the flowers. About three miles from Hardi we left the coast-plain and entered a barren valley which the rain seemed to have missed. The mountains were very bare, mostly composed of porphyry—green, black, and red—with an occasional vein of white quartz. One small hill was entirely composed of a sort of green slate. At the Hardi end of the valley was an old burial ground, the graves in which were quite different from those made at present by the tribes. I had not time to make a long stay, but what struck me as being curious was their immense size. Some of them were square, and composed of blocks of green stone loosely put together. They were about five feet high by about twelve feet long; two were pyramidal shape. I asked Seyed Ali if he knew their history, and he said no; that there was no tradition of who were buried there; that they were very ancient, and that not only in the Erba mountains were they found, but all through the Khor Haiet and leading towards the Suakim-Berber road towards the rock carvings at Rowai; that there were many old buildings with inscriptions in the Khor Haiet, and that the Arabs would not go near them as they were haunted and the work of the devil. The square graves are very nearly identical to those near Kelamet, on the Sanheit-Massowah road, giving an area of over 400 miles long where I know they are found.

We had a small meal at the wells at Hardi, and then,

after giving the camels a drink, went on as quickly as possible, passing the place where O'Nur Magië was taken prisoner by the tribesmen. About a mile from this the road branches into two, the lower one leading to Zellalnawareet, on the upper Amarar road to Ariab, the other, which we followed, into the mountains, our path still being up the Yemena Valley. The view looking back seawards at the junction of these roads is very beautiful; we must have risen considerably over 1,000 feet, and across Roweyah Bay could be seen the salterns with its encampment on the sea beach; Macowa Island and Mahomed Ghoul, with an English steamer loading salt at the two-island anchorage, half way between Mahomed Ghoul and Macowa Island. The path we were travelling up soon became steeper, and we were shut in between two high ridges of mountains. The vegetation commenced to improve and the trees larger, among which were many hegleck, nebbuck, and giant mimosa, with casurina and other trees. We came across several encampments of Kourbabs, who seemed surprised to see a white man. Their huts were the usual mat constructions of the plains, and their mode of living the same. Their flocks were just beginning to pick up from the long drought, and the lambing season had already commenced; round the huts were many small lambs and kids, pretty little things when young. The sheep and goats of this country are of all colours—black, white, brown, red, dun—and the mixed colours show off a flock, and make it a prettier sight than our English sheep. The dogs here are also curious creatures, being of a dirty white or brown colour, with black muzzles. They have feathered tails and legs; the nose and face is sharp, something like a fox's, and they are varmint-looking creatures—and I was not sorry I was out of their reach on my camel—



They make first-rate hunting dogs, course hares and run down a wounded gazelle easily. The natives use them for hunting the ibex, which is very common in the Erba mountains and all along the range from the Amara Asor-triba to Abu Darag, near Suez. The general way of hunting the ibex is to surround a mountain and let the dogs go; they chase the ibex, which invariably makes up hill at first; the dogs follow till they run them to bay on some crag or boulder, and the Arabs surround the animal and then spear it. Four or five big ibex are sometimes taken like this in a morning.

We had some distance more to go, the mountains beginning to get grander every mile of the route, and I never saw a stronger country to hold; a stranger could never follow the inhabitants and would soon get lost, and I do not think it possible to find a more secure stronghold, and the inhabitants could hold out against an enormous force. A few good shots holding some of the gorges would defy hundreds. As soon as the sun had got behind the peaks I got off my camel and walked; the air was quite like a tonic, so invigorating and refreshing after the plains, and the scenery lovely in its boldness and grandeur. We arrived at Mini Hamed's camp just at sunset, he not expecting us till the next morning. He seemed delighted to see me, and told me to make myself quite at home. We soon had camp fire lit, and the old gentleman brought us out some new mats to put on the ground; he offered us one of his huts, but I preferred camping out in the open. I was introduced to his three wives; the old one, mother of his grown-up sons, was a dear old soul, and had never seen a white man before; the other two were much younger, one a very pretty girl about twenty, mother of two little boys. Mini Hamed has nine sons and

two daughters alive, and about forty grandchildren and two great grandchildren—quite an old patriarch. They killed a sheep for me, brought some bowls of beautiful fresh sheep and goat's milk, which I prefer infinitely to cow's milk, and we set to work to make a good supper. We had the mutton stewed with rice, roast gazelle, sardines, biscuits, sweet and common, jam, coffee, tea, pickles, and a lot of other things, and not only did old Mini Hamed enjoy himself, but the whole of the family. I refused to be treated as a stranger, and was soon perfectly at home with them all, they asking me question upon question about the English and England, and whether we were in the pay of the Egyptians, and I asked nearly as many questions about themselves. Only four of the whole party smoked, and they, therefore, did not make much demand on my stock of tobacco. We broke up very late, and it was not long before everything was quiet round the encampment, the only noise that broke the stillness was the calling of the owls and the foxes. The moon rose over the mountain top, and I could see our encampment was in the middle of a five-pointed, star-shaped valley. I was too sleepy to admire the beauties of the scene, and went off to sleep, having to kick my servant Gaduf once or twice as his snoring was too loud to be pleasant.

We were astir early next morning, and I went up the nearest neighbouring hill, I should say some 500 feet high, to see the sun rise and to get a view of the country. On arriving at the top, I got a fine view eastwards and south and north of east, but everything westwards was shut out by the higher peaks of the Erba group. I was immediately under the chain of heights that can be seen from the centre of the Red Sea, and are so conspicuous by their saw shape

under me were line upon line of hills, and in the distance the plain and the Red Sea, and I could see miles of the coast line with its protecting reefs stretching in some places for miles parallel to the shore. I found in the clefts of the rocks several ferns entirely new to me, and which I have not noticed in Abyssinia. It was too soon after the rains to get flowers, as the grass and plants were only just commencing to grow, and the trees putting on their young leaves. I returned to camp, and Mini Hamed told me that the next day he would get up an ibex drive, and that he had already sent his sons round to get men and dogs together. I amused myself all day long by rambling about the neighbouring hills and valleys, revelling in the change of climate from the plains. The eastern sides of these mountains all drain towards the sea, and the western towards the Khor Haiet. I long to explore the whole western side of the range of mountains that run from here to the Amara Asortriba, as after the rains there must be plenty of vegetation and pasturage in the valleys, as the soil is all formed from the washings from the mountains, which must be fertile. We had more yarns round the camp fire in the evening, and several visitors came to see me. I cannot enter into all the folk lore and all the interesting information I picked up, but I was told that the western part of this country had never been visited by white men, at least they had no remembrance of anyone ever having been there, and as it is a blank in the maps I suppose there is no written description of the country. They told me that the ibex are very common, and a few wild sheep further westwards are found. The ostrich has been seen in the plains, but is very rare, as the Komelab horsemen killed them all off; they used to be common about thirty years ago. A few rhinoceros used to inhabit the

valley to the west of the Zakenhelt desert, but they were all killed off by the Komelab, who, from their accounts, hunt like the Hamram Arabs of the Setite country. None of Mini Hamed's tribe had been killed in the late wars, but several had been wounded, and I saw two men with bullets still in them, and one man who had one eye destroyed and his face badly wounded by the lead splinters from a shell. These were wounded at El Teb, and as soon as they found they had English soldiers to deal with they left Osman Digna.

The ibex drive next day was not quite a success, although I dreamt of forty-inch horns and getting at least a dozen. The drive took place on the "Sierra" ridge, and after seeing several small animals pass me at about 250 yards off I fired at a young male at about eighty yards off, which I wounded, and the dogs killed it. Just as I fired the big ones, which were in a neighbouring gorge, and no doubt would have been driven within easy shooting distance of me, broke back, and I lost my chance. I saw some of them, and one male with very fine horns. The weather was still too hot for stalking; in January and February it is quite cool, and grand sport could be got by giving up enough time to it. I have heard of no part of the world where there are more ibex, and should sportsmen at home care about grand scenery, exploring mountains that nothing is known of, Arab hospitality, and regular hard work, they could not try a better place than the Erba Mountains. One word of advice—take no Egyptian Cairo dragoman; a Maltese or Syrian Christian, as long as he did not wear a tarbush, would do. Arrange beforehand with the sheik that a visit was contemplated, and as long as these hillsmen were treated in a fair and honourable manner the visitor would be just as safe among them as he would

be in England, India, or elsewhere. Old Mini Hamed used to boast that a dervish or Egyptian had never put foot on his mountains, and as long as he or his sons were alive they never would. I enjoyed my visit immensely, although I had very little sport except getting enough small game for the pot.

I look forward to my next visit to these beautiful mountains and their interesting inhabitants with pleasure. The people are good Moslems, and not the least fanatical; sportsmen and good all-round men, and long may they continue to be so. I returned to Mahomed Ghoul at Roweyah, remained there a few days, and then left for Suakim, taking a different route to my last; remained twenty-four hours at Khor Arbat with the sheik of the Gedaloïab tribe, and rode over his district looking at his dhurra crops. What a change in the landscape since I was there in September. Trees all in full leaf, the grass knee deep in places, the flocks all fat and looking well, and everyone as happy as they could be, enjoying life and revelling in an unlimited supply of milk. From Khor Arbat I went straight to Suakim to arrive there in time for Christmas Eve. As usual, when I had no time for shooting I saw hundreds of ariel and common gazelle, only getting one of the latter, and bustard innumerable. Within eighteen miles of Suakim, just before sunset, I managed to kill a very fine cock bustard, which I knew would be acceptable to the officers' mess for their Christmas dinner, it being much better eating than the best turkey. I arrived outside the walls of Suakim at about nine o'clock, and tried to get in at all the gates, but was told to go away, abused, and cursed, hearing the first unfriendly words since I had left the town. It was raining a little, and it was indeed hospitality, being shut out

of the town on Christmas Eve, when others were enjoying themselves. I was about done—had nothing to eat since the morning. I had ridden over 60 miles across country; my camel fell with me about eight miles from Suakim, and I had walked the last bit in on foot without a companion of any sort. I managed to get round to the south gate. The sentries threatened to shoot me, and at last by calling I managed to wake up an Egyptian officer, who kindly allowed me, although, as he said, against his orders, into his quarters. I found out that he had known me in Massowah and Sanheit. He kindly gave me a cup of hot tea, gave me up his bed, and behaved as a good Samaritan, and although naturally angry at my treatment, I had to thank a half Turk and Egyptian for hospitality that was denied me by my own countrymen. I leave the reader to imagine if an Englishman is treated in the way I was, how the natives fare at the hands of the rulers of Suakim. It was the first experience I had of Christmas Eve in an Egyptian lock-up, and I hope it will be the last.

I found next morning the state of affairs worse than when I had left, pacification not advanced in the least, and still the absurd idea of making Tokar submit. There was only one end to this policy, namely, bloodshed and further disturbances. There seemed to be no wish to make friends with the tribes outside and open up the country. The golden opportunities and rare chances of opening up the Eastern Soudan were let slip, and instead of a wish to drive Mahdism further away the policy seemed to draw it on and allow the tribes already pacified to become unfriendly another time. Instead of a conciliatory policy being carried out, that pursued savoured more of military despotism—despotism that was impotent to threaten or harm outside the

range of the guns of Her Majesty's ships in Suakim harbour. So sure was I—and all who knew the country—what the result would be, that I recorded my opinion in writing, and that Tokar would never be friendly, or “fall,” as the term was, as long as the present policy was carried on. So ended the year 1886. At one time our hopes rose, and we thought that a settlement of the question would be arrived at, but by the end of the year the position was worse than it was in the autumn.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON EVENTS IN 1887.

I DETERMINED as soon as possible after my return from the north to show others in Suakim that what I had been doing, could also be done by any other Englishman, as long as they treated the natives properly. So I volunteered if anyone liked to accompany me to take them out shooting to the north of Suakim. On New Year's Day, Captain Lambton, the senior naval officer, one of his lieutenants, Dr. Galbraith, the senior Egyptian medical officer, and myself started for Gezirat Abdullah by sea. Owing to the bad steam launch made use of we never arrived at our destination, and our whole trip was a failure. We landed short of our point. Captain Lambton got, I think, the best doe Ariel I ever saw, and a few quail, sand-grouse, and hare completed our bag. We enjoyed ourselves, the natives were friendly, and Captain Lambton and his native servant walked into Suakim without any difficulty. From this time it was the custom for officers to go out shooting anywhere they liked from near Tamaai to anywhere north, and I think every officer in garrison appreciated the liberty they enjoyed, but did not understand quite the change in the behaviour of the tribesmen. This they were aware of, that as long as a pacific



policy was carried out, and that they personally and individually could deal with the natives outside, there was no danger, and as long as the policy was left to the "mess" they would have lived on in peace with the tribesmen, and have been welcome wherever they wanted to go. This did not suit Mahmoud Ali's party and his backers, as it was showing the Suakim clique what they were, and what little influence they had, except they were under the guns of the forts at Suakim. The year steadily went on, and the policy pursued got worse and worse after every successive day. Tokar was the rock on which everything split, and to get hold of the Barka Delta by fair means or foul was the only thing thought of. The tribesmen were willing to come to terms with the merchants, be friends, cultivate cotton, and leave it to the honour of the merchants to supply them with grain instead of growing their supplies. One thing they would not do—that is, allow the Egyptians to have the management of the Delta. Who could blame them, and who was there that dare openly preach a reconquest of the Soudan or any part of the interior? There are more ways than one to annoy the Soudanese, and nothing is easier to arouse the fighting spirit of the tribes than by the petty and short-sighted policy that was carried on. I think that the whole management of relations between the English and the Soudanese has shown all through a great lack of tact, and who is to blame for it? There is not one single move that we can congratulate ourselves on, and our colonies east or west have never been won, nor could they be held if they were left to those that have been responsible for what has taken place in the Soudan.

It is very easy to pick a policy to pieces the same as to take a clock to bits, the job is to put it together again; and

it wants first a person capable of picking a policy to pieces and then to put it together, so that it will run smoothly, before attempting the work. What has been done in Suakim is to upset everything that was done before: the clock was taken in pieces at once, but it was entirely impossible for the destroyer to arrange the mechanism again. It is easy enough to write a paper policy for the Soudan, but it is very difficult to get it to work; and this is evidently what has been done with the Eastern Soudan, and it has led us into further bloodshed.

I take it, it will not be denied by either of the great political parties at home that they are both sick and tired of the Soudan question, and are, therefore, frightened of doing anything that might again bring about troubles; that when the Soudan question was first brought before the public that the party that is now in power was in a minority, and that they now hold office from the gross blunders committed by their opponents, and still they would not be paramount unless it was for seceders from their opponents, who were disgusted with what was being done with home and, to a certain extent, with foreign politics; that the only reason why the present Government do not finish the Soudan question is that they are frightened of hurting the susceptibilities of those that have come over from the other camp.

Let us take, firstly, what was going on in Egypt when the disturbances commenced in the Soudan; they date back to about the same time as the Arabist movement which led to war, or putting down the rebellion in Egypt. A more hare-brained idea than the cloak to the movement Arabi headed, viz., a wish to be free, never could have been promulgated. The fellah, had Arabi been successful, would have been worse off than ever he was before, and it was a change

to uncertainty from a certainty. Had the Arabist movement succeeded it would have ended in letting in the Turk, who would have successfully, and in a very short time, have squeezed the fellaheen more effectually than ever Ismael Pasha did.

Egypt of to-day is not the Egypt I remember it in 1877, or before that date, but a peaceful and improving country, with every chance of the labouring population advancing in the social scale. In Egypt one steps from the palace into the ploughed field (if I may use the term when speaking of Egyptian cultivated fields), and *vice versâ*; there are only two classes really, the pasha and the peasant. If the former are kept in order, which I think they are now by our English officials, they will in time subside into perfect nonentities collectively, although there will also be a few of them, capable men, who wish to see their country improve, and will work honestly for that end. The majority of the pashas, however, are unfit for anything but a life of pleasure and intrigue, and will never make administrators. What a future generation may be after they study how to govern and understand what a blessing a long run of prosperous years mean for their country, will be different. One thing they ought to take to heart, after the terrible last twelve years they have gone through, is that they are not a military nation, but a nation of cultivators, and their only aim should be to be strong enough to defend their fields from local or neighbouring tribes, and have done once and for all with the idea of conquest of the Soudan or any neighbouring territory.

I know of no place on the globe that has the chances Egypt has to improve and to be a country where agriculture need be the only aim of its inhabitants, and with this aim

it will be left alone and enjoy the respect of other nations. Its whole aim, therefore, should be to drop its military traditions, which have hitherto only led them into mischief, and brought ruin on the country. Whenever it has made conquests it has been obliged to use foreigners, and if one looks at its modern history any improvement that can be traced is due to civilians and not to military men. The country, like the Suez Canal, should be made neutral, and the administration left to civilians, and a police force strong enough to overawe any demonstration that might be made in the towns of Alexandria and Cairo. Had there been no army in 1882 that Arabi could have made use of, there would have been no disturbances, and those that are responsible for the management of Egypt should remove the possibility of any empty-headed demagogue of his class being able to bring about the temporary ruin of his country. The only good that Arabi's rebellion did was to prove to the world that the Egyptians are not a military nation, but being looked after by competent civilians they are able to take their place among the list of prosperous and respected countries.

As long as the inhabitants of the Delta are not unduly taxed, and know what their taxes are to be and to pay no more than what is necessary to keep up the administration of their country on a peace footing, they will remain quiet, honour their present Khedive, and thank the English for having brought about a better state of things than they ever enjoyed before, and that there is no more chance of service in the terrible Soudan.

There is no doubt that the defeat of the Egyptian army in Egypt hastened the rebellion in the Soudan, and the whole collapse of their forces during 1883 in different parts of the

country was no matter for astonishment. In 1879 I informed the Foreign Office that unless another Christian Governor-General succeeded the late General Gordon in the Soudan the reaction would be terrible, as the Soudanese were not then in a frame of mind to be treated unfairly after their short experience of good government. How true the opinion formed has since proved, and the utter collapse of Egyptian prestige as a fighting power will never enable them to reconquer the Soudan unless they employ some other nation to do it for them.

I think it will be seen that the collapse of the Egyptian power, and removing, therefore, the Egyptian element, was more brought about by England than anyone else. That they were utterly unfitted for the task of governing the Soudan there can be no doubt. Where England has dealt unfairly in the Soudan was not so much as by not "smashing" Mahdism, as the term was, but by failing to aid those that had interests, commercial and agricultural, in that country. This element was quite strong enough with a little aid to have "smashed" Mahdism, which we failed to do, and the last two years nearly have been spent in trying to replace the Egyptian influence in the country, and not helping those who wish to see law and order prevail, but at the same time have no wish to be regoverned by anyone who is associated with the tarbush, and has the sole aim of replacing Egyptian influence.

The Egyptians hold Suakim on sufferance, and were the English men-of-war to be withdrawn it would be quite possible for the rebels to come to terms with the inhabitants and get rid of the garrison. Abandonment is still contemplated, I believe, and I cannot see why some simple and permanent policy cannot be carried on at once. What is the

state of affairs in the Soudan, and how easy it is to get the well-disposed part of the population to come to terms and split up Mahdism. How little the question is understood, and what a disgrace it appears to be to our administrators that they do not face the question manfully, and put an end to all the sickening slaughter that has taken place and is now going on.

The two elements in the Soudan that can be put against each other at once are these: the followers of the Mahdi, composed of the dervishes and the slave dealers, and who are in the minority, and the traders and the cultivators, who form by far the larger party. Mahdism, to commence with, is fatal to cultivation and to trade; from the former it demands too large a share of the produce of the soil, and from the latter too large a percentage of its profits ever to allow of a successful business being carried on. Its teachings are also repugnant to the majority of the tribes, and its customs as well, which do not allow of its followers being free agents; its rulers are despotic and tyrannical. All this is against it ever taking firm root among the free and indolent inhabitants of the country, who are only waiting to see what policy is going to be adopted on the coast before making up their minds to get rid of Mahdism; they can afford to wait, but would rise at once and shake off the rule they dislike as long as they knew that they were not to be handed back to the equally detested Egyptian, who now, everyone knows, is incapable of looking out after his own country properly, and therefore the Soudan.

Round Suakim and in the neighbourhood there are taking from the north on the borders of the old Egyptian frontier, the Bishareens, who are entirely friendly. They fill the whole country, one may say, between Mersa Halaib right

round to Berber; what their number of fighting men is composed of there is no documentary evidence to prove, but it is admitted on all sides to be large. The Amarars fill in the other part of the country north of the Suakim-Berber road, as far as Ariab to Roweyah. This tribe's resources are now well known. The Hadendowies take south of the Berber-Suakim road to Cassala, and from Cassala to Suakim. The Tokar tribes fill the Barca Delta, and the Beni Amer and Habab tribes the remaining portion of the country towards Massowah. The Shukeriyehs, the great carriers of the Soudan, are on the opposite side of the Hadendowie tribe nearer Khartoum; and then the Taka tribes, which are a mixture, run down as far as Sennaar.

It is these great Eastern tribes of the Soudan that have the settlement of the Soudan question, and were they to be united by one common object—trade—they would soon settle down. These tribes at the same time may be called the non-slaving tribes, although they allow slave caravans to pass through their districts. It is not known that they make slave raids into the interior, or attack their neighbours, take them prisoners, and sell them into slavery, like other African tribes of the interior. Between these tribes and the Nile are the riverain, or cultivating tribes, that can always be counted on to be on the side of law and order, opposed to a military and non-settled form of government. There are two old commercial roads into the interior, namely, from Suakim and Massowah; the latter has now, happily, passed out of the sphere of Egyptian influence, and, to a certain extent neutralizes the influence that Suakim has over the tribes of the interior.

One most important point must be taken into consideration, that since Egypt removed from Massowah Mahdism

fell back from its environs. It was making strides towards that place, but the moment the Italian flag went up there it could make no headway, and its power was gone. There could be no more convincing argument to be deducted from this fact, that Mahdism has no hold over the tribes as long as the Egyptian official is removed. The same may be said in the north, where there is no Egyptian military authority or Suakim clique to annoy the tribesmen, and where trade is allowed everything is quiet.

The moment that the Italian-Abyssinian question is settled, which it is to be hoped will now be soon, Abyssinia will be enabled to use all her force to deal with the dervishes on her frontier. Mahdism will be driven back, as the frontier merchants will be able to commence trading, and again find a market for their produce. They were strictly neutral throughout the frontier disturbances, and many of them found asylum in Abyssinia. These merchants are the collectors of produce, and go about in large numbers with their families, collecting gum and other natural products of the country. As long as there are disturbances they cannot travel or help the peacefully inclined population; combined with them they are strong enough to protect themselves, but it is no use their collecting goods when they have no markets for them and no purchasers, which has been the case since the embargo against trade was put on in 1883.

The Tokar or Barca Delta business is another simple matter to arrange, as long as there is no attempt made to retake it; and there will be an increased and larger cultivation there than ever there was before, as the landowners are perfectly aware who are their friends, and will not for one moment allow a foreign element to settle amongst



them, that neither by their labour nor their presence tend to help them to live in peace with the merchants who supply them with the necessaries of life, and buy the produce of the soil.

There is no reason why the tribes I have mentioned should not govern themselves; they have their own tribal sheiks, each their recognized chief, their tribal code of laws; their honesty in olden days was proverbial, and very little crime was known among them; of course, there were always bad characters to be found, but they stole among themselves, and any merchant that suffered loss was always indemnified by the head sheik. Now that the Egyptian Government are removed, the merchants and the sheiks will have more direct dealings with each other than they had before, and there is no reason to believe that the sheiks will abuse the trust placed in them. From the experience learnt in the last few years it would seem to be impossible ever to expect the Egyptians, who are not yet fit to govern themselves without foreign aid, to be able to take the Soudan in hand again; and, long before they are able to afford to pay for a large mercenary army, the Soudan question will be settled; and it looks as if Italy, by allowing trade to go on, would have more to do with pacifying the country than England, especially if she makes friends with the Abyssinians, who can and will help to put an end to Mahdism, which is after all only composed of the bad characters in the country, the turbulent spirits, and those that by their new faith are utterly antagonistic to true Moslems of either the old or the enlightened school.

The Ashrufs of the Soudan are still a great power and looked up to. Round them the tribes will rally and the

death-blow to disorder will commence with trade, and finding employment for the inhabitants, which they entirely lack at the present moment.

The question of making use of the Turk to settle the question and allowing him to be the paramount power in the country can be dismissed as never being likely. The centuries during which he has had Arabia, the next-door neighbour, as it may be called, to the Soudan, he has entirely failed to make his power felt. As a brigand he came and settled on two points of the coast on islands, where he traded with the mainland. He held his own on the islands, but never made his power felt a few miles even outside his settlements. He never exploited the coast or the interior, never left a mark of utility behind, nor can he claim any other points on the coast but these: the inhabitants of the country owe him no allegiance, and only as Moslems do they look upon the Sultan as the military champion of their religion. Turkey has had nothing to do with the new Tribal Ports.

Granted that the Turk was allowed back there, the first thing he would do would be to encourage the slave trade, give his moral countenance to the fitting out of armed bands by the Arabs for slave raiding, and light the torch of anarchy and confusion throughout Central Africa.

There is no chance of Turkey wishing to get into such a hornets' nest, as the tribesmen are very different from when the mixed army of Mahomed Ali walked through the Soudan, and the Turks know it. To reconquer the Soudan they have no money to spare, and they would require an army of at least 100,000 men to occupy the country properly, and when after some years they had occupied, they never could afford to hold it; nor would they develop it commercially, foster the old and start new industries, without which the country can

never pay. The Turk, from all accounts, would be only too glad to get something for the nominal claim they may have to Suakim and Massowah, but if it went they would content themselves by drawing up a protest and say "Allah Kerim." There is not enough ready-money to be got out of the remaining towns of the interior to satisfy a pasha's eunuch, let alone a pasha. The Turk may bluster over the Red Sea Soudan littoral, but he knows he is powerless to do any good with the country, and it will be only a source of expense which he cannot afford. Ask him to go back and he will refuse. Public opinion would never stand Africa being again given over to a slave-dealing nation, which allowing or paying the Turks to take the Soudan means.

There seems to be a severe political hitch in dealing with the question of the remaining portion of the Soudan littoral which need not be; there is already a precedent for dealing with it, as before the canal was opened, or immediately after it, England agreed with Ismael Pasha, the Viceroy of Egypt, to acknowledge his, not the Sultan's, suzerainty over the whole coast from Suez to Ras Harfoon, south of Cape Gardafui. This agreement was not tenable as regards Obock and Assab Bay, taken by France and Italy respectively. Since the abandonment of the Soudan the littoral has again been dealt with, England protecting the Somali coast; France took Tajurrah and Tajurrah Bay, where an Egyptian garrison was formerly stationed, and the Italians the whole coast from Assab to some 80 miles north of Massowah, including the town of Massowah. Has that wonderful Berlin Treaty been broken by the actions of England, Italy, and France, three of the signatory Powers, by taking this coast, or were agreements between Ismael Pasha and England not included in this treaty?

Could a protectorate be proclaimed over the remaining portion of the Red Sea Littoral, and trade opened, it would immediately alter the present aspect of affairs most materially, and there would be an end to all the trouble and annoyance that now take place. The tribesmen outside would get rid of Mahdism and there would be no necessity of shooting them down like rabid dogs, and in a season they would be able to keep Mahdism away from the coast, and threaten it if need be. A military idea rampant in Cairo is, that Suakim must be held in force as a flank demonstration against the dervishes advancing on Egypt by the Nile; this is really too ludicrous. Here are the Egyptians who cannot leave their forts terrifying the advancing forces of the Mahdi *viâ* the Nile. Neither of the English expeditions went across the desert, and the dervishes fully believed that they could not, so how in the name of common sense can a few wretched Egyptians, stationed in Suakim, inspire any awe in the Soudanese and prevent them, if they choose, marching up the Nile? What would frighten the dervishes is to know that they had a united Eastern Soudan against them, and to make that Eastern Soudan friendly they must be told that there is no intention of allowing Egypt to regovern them and offer them what now they are denied, viz., an amnesty for what has passed, and trade that no civilized nation ought to prevent.

England has blundered over what she has done, and we owe the Soudan justice and reparation for having treated her so badly. All are liable to make faults, but when those faults are carried on and no attempt is made to put matters right then faults become crimes, and it is really criminal our policy carried on at the present moment, and cannot be defended either from a military, social, or commercial point of

view. There has been no really honest attempt to settle the question, and if it is beyond the capabilities of the bureaucracy that manage the affairs at home, why not call in the help of the India office and its capable Indian officials, who would deal with the question at once, and put an end to the misery that is going on? Take what the Aden authorities have done with this Somali country, which is a more difficult country to deal with than the Soudan. There is no disturbance, no annoyance, trade goes on, and nine hundred and ninety-nine Englishmen out of a thousand do not know that the inhabitants of this country look to the Queen and Empress of India as their nominal ruler, and are all of them contented with the exchange that has been made. So it would be with the Soudan if the question was tackled in the way it should be, and not left to the military to manage, and make the Soudan a field for cheap glory and killing people. We ought to be teaching them the arts of peace and civilization. Any killing of dervishes that is required will be done by the tribes if properly managed, and it really seems amongst all our officials we cannot find one with all modern resources at his command that can equal what Emin Bey is doing single-handed and cut off from civilization. If he was an Englishman he would be held up to the world as the greatest hero of the century, loaded with honours on his return, and his name in everyone's mouth.

An obscure foreigner can hold out against enormous odds, has his province in order, and can fight against all hardships and inconveniences; he is, no doubt, aware of the splendid work he is doing, and prefers to stick to the people who have been faithful to him rather than come home and be a ten-days' wonder and then forgotten. The man sent to rescue him also prefers to forget the land of his birth and his

parentage, and England's children have wofully deteriorated that they cannot settle the Soudan question amongst them. It has been a sad business throughout, and not pleasant reading. It is for the public, who are really the people, to say that something must be done to correct the errors that have been made, and some new policy started that has other merits than oppression and slaughter.

There is not only the Soudan question in which we have behaved badly, but the Abyssinian one as well, and there is no credit to be attached to unfulfilled treaties and deserting an ally that has helped us in the time of need and sacrificed his subjects for our benefit. Whether England is strong enough and has such a clean reputation that she can afford to laugh at broken promises need not be entered into, but for those of her subjects that are brought into contact with the people that have been deceived is a serious matter, and it will take thorough explanations before the bad impression now formed by the Abyssinians for England's behaviour since 1884 wears off. If King John had been informed that circumstances over which we had no control made it impossible for us to enter into the arrangements we had hoped to carry out with him, it would have been a different matter. By neglecting to let him know what was going on, and the object of the Italian occupation of Massowah, we brought about a war and the massacre of many Italian soldiers which might have been prevented. We neither did a friendly action to Abyssinia nor to the Italians, and the latter may well make any remarks they think fit on our behaviour as we have come out of the business with soiled hands. Our treaty with King John did not stipulate that we were to keep an agent in his country, but it may be read that we ought to have kept a Consul at Massowah to look

after his interests and the joint interests of the merchants of the two countries. I have never been an advocate for protecting merchants going into a foreign country unless it be a civilized one. Anyone that wished to trade with Abyssinia could have done so at his own risk, and I do not think that he would have had cause to regret it. What the treaty was made to cover was that the sea-board should belong to Egypt, and there all were to be on the same footing; trade was to be allowed, and all disputes to be referred to England. This became impossible as England kept no representative there. Had she done so neither Italy would have fallen into the error she did of taking the neutral territory, or the Abyssinians committing the hostile act of driving them out. The cause of the war would have been impossible, and the question of the demarkation of the frontier, which King John has always wished settled, would have been arranged, and Italy would have obtained a large slice of territory in a peaceable manner, instead of having to fight for a small increase of country which never can be worth the money she has expended over it. There is a great deal of difference between a fussy and interfering policy and a businesslike settlement of a question raised when obligations have been entered into. Had either, after Admiral Hewett's treaty, or when the Italians occupied Massowah, a communication been sent to King John that a permanent settlement was required, he would have been the first to have hailed any arrangement that might have been entered into, as long as it was not based on giving up the passes that lead into his country and the regained Bogos territory. There has been a great deal said about the right of Abyssinia to a seaport, but this question has always been raised by foreigners who have been living in Abyssinia for their

own benefit, and in 1876 I explained to the Abyssinian officials that they were not far enough advanced to be able to deal with a seaport, and that owning one would certainly lead them into trouble with other countries. The question of the possession of a seaport has never seriously been considered by King John; his claim to be allowed to trade through Massowah has always been a just one, and there is no reason why his wishes should not have been taken into consideration a long time ago. The right to trade through Massowah was recognized and provided for by Admiral Hewett's treaty, but England has never seen that this clause has been carried out. Had the obligations been carried out that England entered into, we should not now be deploring the unhappy state of affairs that exists, we might have kept our reputation with the Abyssinians as being a high-minded and honourable nation, and we should have been thanked by our new allies, the Italians, for helping them in their young endeavours at colonization; we should have saved them the loss both by war and disease of many of their children, and the expenditure of much money, which might have been diverted to peaceful purposes. There can be no doubt that we have been morally responsible for the dispute between the two countries, and by not keeping a Consul at Massowah to look after our interests have done not only an act of injustice to people that were our friends, but also put our large colony of East Indian merchants at Massowah to great inconvenience. Had a Consul been at Massowah there would have been no excuse to have gone to the expense of Mr. Portal's mission, which anyone must have known could but be a failure as long as it was based on asking King John to sue for peace, instead of coming to an amicable agreement with Italy. A happy termination of the dispute



now seems likely, and there is no reason why England should not carry out towards King John what is due to him. There is the opportunity for the present Government to carry out the obligations that the last Government entered into, and to repair the broken promises made. There need be no fear of entering into obligations that it is difficult to see the end of. It is no fussy or meddling intervention seeing a finish once and for all made of a business that can only be costly to Italy, who has thoroughly maintained her prestige.

Regrets can be interchanged for what has taken place, and from what I know of King John's character he will be very glad to meet the Italians more than half way in all they desire. Italy will take it as a kind action and a true mark of friendship if England does what she can to bring about peace, and the moment peace is signed trade will take place, and the two countries will be able to enter into commercial intercourse to the mutual benefit of both. There is a future for Italy's new acquisition of Massowah as long as there is peace and a small garrison kept up, and it can only be a costly trouble as long as war goes on. The two countries are both the common enemy of the dervish, and combined they can do more against Mahdism than ever England can. There seems only one common-sense way to look at the question, viz., a peaceful settlement and a new commencement, which the English Government can bring about if they wish.

What refers to the Massowah question is equally applicable to the Eastern Soudan question. If there are complications such as not to make it advisable to withdraw the Egyptian flag from the small remaining portion of the Soudan Red Sea littoral, it is still easy to bring about a peaceful settlement of the question by acting simply on the

defensive at Suakim. Let it be once and for all clearly understood that England does not intend to allow Egypt to reconquer or regovern the Soudan, that Suakim will be held as a trading port, and that its inhabitants are not to be allowed to annoy the surrounding tribes, and that raids and cattle-stealing will be punished, the outside tribes will at once understand that their only enemy is Mahdism, and with it they will deal in a short and decisive manner. It is only their fear of the greater evil of the two—the Egyptian Government coming back to them—that keeps them in the disturbed state they are now in. If Suakim is to be held by troops in Egyptian pay let it be held by the blacks, who from their colour have not the irritating effect on the tribesmen that the Egyptians have. The tribesmen stand fairly in awe of the blacks, but they do not of the Egyptians, and if the tribesmen were to ask the Egyptian officials at Suakim for any military aid they know that the blacks would fight and be of some service, while the Egyptians are nearly useless, as they never can be relied on in time of danger. With a small black force to hold Suakim, legitimate trade being allowed, which will find employment for many idle hands, the cultivation of cotton and tobacco in the Barca Delta and other industries, would make a great change come over the Eastern Soudan, and the spears of the tribesmen, which are now pointed towards the abortive Egyptian military demonstration at Suakim, would be turned towards the dervishes. It is never too late to mend; the tribesmen still respect the English, and a few Englishmen have still influence with them, and a quiet settlement can be made if the Government wish it, that would cost them nothing. However, if Suakim must be held as a flank menace to the dervishes, or that the disturbances in the Soudan are a pretext for the pro-

longed occupation of Egypt, it will be more difficult for the public to insist on justice being done the Soudan. The moment we move out of Egypt the nation that takes our place will repair our errors and deal with the Soudan in a very different way from what we are doing. There is a debt we owe the Soudanese that we have not yet paid; there are the lives of those brave men that gave up everything for the Soudan and the suppression of the slave trade to be thought of, and I do not see, as long as England has anti-slavery feelings, how she can ignore the settlement of the Soudan question, and why she should refuse to tackle the very simple work set her to do.

Whatever may be said to hoodwink the public about Egypt being our ally, and that it is a reason why we are obliged to slaughter the Soudanese who are striving to be free, cannot stand for one moment. We crushed a military dictatorship in Egypt and have benefited the fellaheen. We now refuse to aid the commercial and agricultural Soudanese (not asked to do so by force of arms, mind) by trade and opening their coast to settle what is as bad to them as Arabi Pasha's dictatorship would have been to the Egyptians. Italy can do through Massowah (which she never will give up, in spite of fifty Berlin treaties) what England refuses to do at Suakim, and if required she will obtain the aid of every English commercial house that has ever had any dealings with the Soudan, and she will receive the moral support of every well-wisher that would like to see her African policy a success, and what Egypt or Turkey can never perform, viz., the civilization and advancement of the Eastern African tribes.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SLAVE TRADE—EASTERN SOUDAN.

I HAVE been asked to add a chapter to my book on the slave trade carried on in the Red Sea, and I must condense in a short space an account of what really ought to fill a good-sized volume. From the moment I took up my permanent residence in the Red Sea in the winter of 1874 and '75, I have probably had better opportunities of watching the workings of this demoralizing traffic than most people, and as it was always a labour of love to me catching a slave-dealer or annoying him in any way, I have spent many of my odd moments in trying to learn as much as possible about the trade with the view, when the time arrived, to be able to deal the traffic and all concerned in it a crushing blow. I feel strongly on the subject of slavery, and so would the most callous of fashionable English people if they knew all that took place. I want to enter into the argument of "Oh, the slave is much better off than if he were running about in his native country. Why should we interfere?" I agree altogether with this saying. The slave is better off on many occasions in captivity than when he is in his native country. Why should we interfere? For many reasons. For each slave that becomes happy

(mind, after having passed through a lot of miseries before he gets to that state of happiness), statistics prove that at least ten people have died to bring the one slave into the so-called state of happiness and to pass his life as a sort of domestic beast of burden for an Arab master, sometimes below and sometimes a little above him in the social scale. Let the doctor dissect the slave and the master on death. With the exception of, if the slave is black, there is a different colouring in the skin, they are identically the same, member for member, and they are both the work of the Great God of Nature. The souls of both have not yet been dissected, so we are to take it for granted that they are the same.

The public would be very indignant if the black made a slave of the white, and for each white that was brought into captivity ten died. The traffic being associated with murder, fornication, rape, unsexing males, and every cruelty, therefore I dislike the traffic and those that participate in it, and I think it ought to be put down. Another reason, that as long as the slave trade goes on nominally under the protection of Turkey, no Christian merchant can well compete in the Soudan trade against the Mahommedan merchant, who buys the slave as a beast of burden, and it is only in cultivation where the Christian has the pull over the Moslem. Cultivation in the Soudan is a new industry, and it has not been possible to carry it on since the war broke out.

I think it better to work from Mecca and Jeddah back to where the slave comes from, as it is with the trade at Jeddah and the Soudan coast where I have been most brought into contact with it, and where I have learnt most of my experience. It must not be for one moment thought that all Arabs are slave-dealers; and there is a great deal of difference between the merchant that buys a slave or two for his

own use and those that make their living out of it. There is a recognized slave market at Mecca, which is always more largely supplied during the pilgrimage than at any other time of year; and there are plenty of private markets at Jeddah where slaves are kept for sale, and where many of them are warehoused before being sent to Mecca.

The slave-brokers are a recognized guild both at Mecca and Jeddah; the slave merchants are all known, and there is hardly any secrecy, after one knows the country thoroughly, in how the whole business is conducted. Only at Jeddah, where there are European consuls, is there some show made by the Turks of preventing the slaves being exposed in public; but there is no difficulty in obtaining slaves at any time, and any Mahomedan is allowed to go and see those that are for sale.

Colonel Schaeffer, of the Egyptian service, was at Jeddah last year, and has made a report to Sir Evelyn Baring of what was going on there; the Egyptian officer attached to him had no difficulty in seeing the slaves for sale, and, I believe, was taken to see them by a Turkish military officer. Treaties with Turkey for the suppression of slavery are so much waste paper, as they have never been put in force properly. The Hedjaz may be said to be the ultimate destination of the majority of the African slaves, and from there they find their way to Turkey, Syria, and Persia, the great consuming centres for the inhabitants of poor Africa; it is for these people that the dark Continent must suffer, and the nameless miseries that are still going on must continue. The remedy is in the hands of England, and she has hitherto been the only champion of freedom. Happily for us Italy has now joined England in the Red Sea, and, as her traditions are against slavery, there seems to be every possibility of her

being a most valuable ally in aiding to block the Red Sea passage. To Italy we have to look for help; France, the Republic, and the land of the most free, does not lift her little finger to put down slavery, and I do not think it can be recorded that she ever stopped a slaver or interested herself in putting down the East African slave trade.

The Hedjaz merchant, who is the most interested in the slave trade, is generally a man who is equivalent to our great employers of labour at home, and the slaves he buys he uses as carpenters, masons, coolies, boatmen, and divers (for the mother-o'-pearl trade). It is not because he cannot get other labour that he is forced to procure slaves at any price, but because the profits out of all these trades find their way into his pocket, and the only expenses he is put to is food and scanty clothing. The wage that ought to be paid, and which is so high in Christianized countries, and so cuts down the manufacturer to a small percentage on his capital, is here done away with. He fits out a caravan to go to the frontier markets of the Soudan, say such as Gallabat, Senaar, the Bahr el Gazelle provinces, or Darfur and Kordofan; there he has his agents, very often paid servants of his, who exchange the goods consigned forming the caravans, for slaves, out of which the whole of his profit is to be looked for; and here it is where the Hedjaz merchant has the pull over the Christian merchant or legitimate trader. His agents at these interior markets can purchase at a higher rate than others, all the high-priced and less bulky goods, such as gold dust, musk, ivory, and ostrich feathers, and get his slaves purchased to carry the goods to the coast, thereby saving transport, and the only camels he requires *en route* are a few to take water and food for the slaves.

With the Christian merchant at the interior market he has

to content himself with gums, hides, drugs, and other large and weighty goods, which require many camels and hard labour to bring the produce down to the coast. Some of the slave-dealers at Jeddah and Suakim have, when competition has been brisk, contented themselves by taking up country only very light and valuable goods, such as silks, scents, etc., and then bought of the trader the commoner goods he has had all the trouble to bring up country, made use of that labour, and again bought his return caravans of slaves, and gone away in light marching order back to the coast. There can be no doubt who the inhabitants of the Soudan prefer, namely, the trader who brings them what they require, and pays high rates to them both backwards and forwards from the coast, to the man who only deals in slaves, from whom they make little or nothing out of. The slaves do not come from the country in which these carriers live, but far beyond their limits, and they would be only too glad to help the trader do away with the slaver; and the carrier, not being a slave raider, is not interested in slavery over and above purchasing one occasionally as a domestic slave. Very often this domestic slave is a girl, she gets married to a tribesman, or her master, perhaps, may get a child from her, and she immediately takes her place among the tribes, and is treated exactly the same as any of the other women.

The Hedjaz merchant does not content himself by buying just what he requires for his own use, but purchases all the slaves that he can get hold of—men, women, small children, young girls, young boys, and any eunuch that he can get hold of, they being always taken great care of and better fed, and allowed to ride nearly the whole way to the coast, as being more valuable. The women slaves, I need hardly say, are used for domestic purposes, and the Arab ladies in the



Hedjaz prefer the ugliest they can get hold of, as there is less chance of their husbands being led astray. Woe betide the poor girl if she has anything like decent looks and the husband purchases her without the wife seeing her. Her life from the moment she enters the harem is made a burden to her, and many a "curtain lecture" takes place between husband and wife over the transaction. If the slave manages to get into the family way, and the husband thinks that he has every reason to believe that it is his fault, then the domestic slave gets better treated, but the wife always tries to make him believe that it is someone else. I have seen many of these cases, and the slave girls have come to me for protection, and I never knew a case hardly in which I was not able to arrange the matter amicably between master and slave, generally to the wife's disgust. The boys, according to their age, are used for different purposes. The first thing they are all done to is to undergo the rite of circumcision, and thereby made nominally Moslems. The small children are bought for household purposes, and generally brought up with the owner's children, if he has any. These small slaves are the best off of all, and if they have a kind master and are intelligent it is their own fault often enough if they do not get on in the world; it, however, entirely depends on the caprice of the master. The boys that are large enough to commence learning a trade, as soon as they can get about after the operation they have undergone, are kept at work from sunrise to sunset, and it is astonishing how soon they pick up a trade and make themselves useful and a source of profit to their owners. Those that are turned into boatmen have hard work and get more abuse and kicks than the others. The most cruel work is the pearl diving; each boat may have two or three small slaves on board being taught

how to dive. The plan is simple enough, after a few days' fishing, and when the boats are working over a mother-o'-pearl shell bank that may only have three or four fathoms over it, the small slaves are shown the shells that are brought up, and, although perhaps they cannot swim, they are sent into the water—a stone tied to their feet, a loop placed under their arms, a basket tied round their waist, and down they are sent. At first off they are kept under water for about half-a-minute and then pulled up. If they have not picked up a shell or two they get the rope's end or the stick.

I know of no more sudden change for a small boy who has only just been introduced to the sea than being sent under water to get shells. It is impossible for him to escape, down he must go, on account of the heavy stone, and I often wondered what their feelings must be when first introduced to the depths of the sea. Many die from shock to the system and from fright, and when the living boy that went down is pulled up his owner finds that what was a slave is now only the shell of one, and that the poor little fellow knows the great secret. The life these poor little slaves lead till they become accustomed to the work is very hard. Other slaves are employed looking out after the flocks or in the date and fruit gardens, and their time is not such a hard one. The male slaves are entirely dependent on their owners if they are well treated or not; as with horses, some are well fed and treated, others are badly fed and not looked out after, and the master works them as hard as he can to make as much profit out of them in the shortest period possible. There is no society for the prevention of cruelty to animals or slaves in Arabia, and the lot of the animal or biped is a hard one, as there is only the slight moral sense of wrong that a living thing is being

badly treated, and if they bring in the dollar it covers a multitude of sins, and is a sure salve to the conscience.

The African women slaves are used for domestic purposes, as it is only the poorest and most destitute of Arab women that will take service with other families. As long as an Arab woman is poor and has good looks she can always earn enough to live on, and she may make her way in the world by marriage or helping others to get married; therefore female slaves as servants are always in demand, not only in Arabia, but throughout the Mahommedan world. Of course the women slaves most thought of and in the greatest demand are the Abyssinians, who are liked for their superior talents, and they are very often taken great care of. The traffic in true Abyssinians is nearly unknown, and those that find their way into the market have generally been kidnapped at the Soudan frontier towns. The Galla girls are also called Abyssinians, but there is a difference between the two. The Gallas can be got in great numbers, and there is little known of their country.

It is quite wrong to accuse either King John or King Menelek of having anything to do with the slave trade, as the Mahommedans capture and purchase the Gallas from the far west and south and east of the Galla country. They hold the unenviable position of being surrounded on three sides by slave hunters, and till now we have had no chance of getting among the Gallas and making friends with them. If the men of this country are anything like their women, they will stand a great chance of taking the highest position amongst the tribes of Africa. The women are very pretty, have good figures, small hands and feet, soon become most cleanly in their person and dress, pick up all the benefits of civilization, get fairly educated, make good servants, and

are faithful and loveable. They show no signs of negro origin, either as regards hair or features, and they are nearly all of them a light brown colour, the brown getting lighter according to altitude above the sea. The mother of many an Egyptian or Turk in high position has hailed from the Galla country or Abyssinia.

A great many of the eunuchs sold in Mecca come originally from the Galla country; it is, of course, hard to trace exactly where these poor children are operated on, but there can be no doubt that some of them are made so at or near Hodeidah, actually unsexed in a country flying a flag recognized by all the European nations, and a nation we are all led to believe ought to have the same status as other civilized powers.

Turkey only purchases black and brown eunuchs because she cannot procure others. If she had her way and had the chance, she might buy white ones. What a howl there would be by the mothers in England, and how scandalized they would be if a Turkish vessel came off Brighton or some other watering-place and took away a boat-load or two of the surplus male children that play about on the beach, to be manufactured into harem guards. It is done within less than ten days of London now, and a time may come when the Turk could again do the same in Europe. The black and brown eunuchs are generally made in the interior, at the different slave stations. The smallest boys, that are hardly worth their keep for six months, are taken *en masse* and operated upon, and those that live become very valuable and are taken care of, as they then fetch high prices, not only in the country, but at their destination, wherever it may be—Hodeidah, Jeddah, or Cairo.

There are three sorts of eunuchs. The description of the

operation is not fit for publication, but the commonest kind is where everything is removed. On my last voyage home from Jeddah, *viâ* Tangiers, there were three eunuchs on board taken as a present for the Sultan of Morocco. Their ages averaged from eight to twelve, the oldest being a very pretty Galla boy. They had only just been operated on, and gave an intelligent account of what they had undergone. Their case was reported at Tor, the quarantine station, to the Egyptian authorities, and again to the Governor at Suez, but no steps were taken to punish those that had the eunuchs with them. Besides being used as harem guards, the better-looking Galla eunuchs are used for immoral purposes.

I will believe the Egyptians and Turks are sincere in their endeavours to put down the slave trade when they cease to allow eunuchs to appear in public, and when they are not the occupants of the carriage boxes when a pasha's lady takes her afternoon drive. All eunuchs ought to be registered, what number exist now known, and any person in furture purchasing a eunuch or found with one in his possession under the age of ten years to be immediately punished and the eunuch confiscated and placed in a hospital for incurables. If eunuchs are so essential to the life of the higher classes of Egypt and Turkey they ought to have them manufactured from their own sons. Let it be given out that Achmed or Abdullah has renounced the pleasures of this world and has sacrificed himself for the good of his family, and that will hereafter attend on his father's wives and concubines. The manufacture of eunuchs is the most revolting part of the many horrors of the slave trade, and no one but a few Englishmen seem to stir to denounce it. Our treaties with Turkey are so much waste paper, and the Turkish pasha chuckles at what he does, and buys his

eunuch or slave whenever he requires one in spite of all treaties and all promises. I have never seen a eunuch among the Eastern Soudan tribesmen, so they do not make the demand. If the Turkish and Egyptian pasha did not buy the eunuch there would be no demand, consequently no supply.

How many years more is this to be allowed to continue, and how many lives have there been sacrificed for the eunuchs that are seen on the Shoubra road any Friday afternoon? Every one of them represent at the very least 200 Soudanese done to death to satisfy the requirements of the wealthy class at Cairo and elsewhere. Say there are 500 eunuchs in Cairo to-day, 100,000 Soudanese have died to procure these eunuchs; there is no exaggeration in what I am saying, and how can any Egyptian official that owns one be sincere when he is partly the cause of this misery? He may be, perhaps, a minister, and in communication with our representative regarding the suppression of the slave trade. What reliance can be placed on what he says? Simply none. It was the same with the Sultan of Zanzibar; certainly his treaty putting down the traffic in slaves was a step in the right direction, but it was not enough, and as long as he held slaves, and eunuchs were about his establishment, the other Arabs could see that he evaded the treaty, and if he could they would do so as well.

The great question becomes, What is to be done to put a stop to this vile trade that is depopulating Africa and causing so much misery to millions of human beings? England's list of brave sons that have died in their attempt to put an end to slavery and to open up Africa will increase unless the present treaties are put into force and we demand our rights under them. The Egyptian is now by force obliged to do

something, as he is looked out after. There is no reason to doubt that the moment the last English soldier leaves Egypt that the influence of our representative there will cease, and the slave trade will commence again afresh. This will open the northern roads. The eastern roads, pointing from the interior of the Soudan towards Mecca and Hodeidah, are in full swing, and a great trade is being done. We have the most lamentable accounts of the increased Arab activity and the slave trade from the interior round the lakes, to what may be called the Zanzibar or Equatorial coast. Westward, one may say, the slave trade has entirely ceased, northward to Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, and Egypt it still goes on, but from all accounts in Egypt, Tunis, and Algeria to a lesser extent than to Morocco and Tripoli. The only evidence I can get regarding the northern slave trade is what I have from residents, and from what I read, regarding the Zanzibar and Equatorial littoral as well, but from Suez down to the Red Sea from personal experience. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to the latter.

There can be no doubt that the increased Arab activity all over Eastern Africa is due greatly to what has been done in the Soudan, and it is the final great Arab struggle whether Africa is to be left to them commercially with its concomitant horrors of the slave trade, and depopulation, or that civilized commerce, cultivation, and the opening up of the country is to take place, and that the European is to help the black central races against the Arab and his slave-dealing friends. I have no doubt in my mind what the result will be, and that it will be a decided victory for the European and black as soon as the former can help the latter, and teach him to defend himself, which may be done in many ways. Instead of looking on with concern at what the Germans, Italians, and Belgians

are doing in Africa, we ought to hail with delight the help these free countries will give us. I do not wish it to be understood that we are to fold our hands and allow them to cut us out, but, that instead of neglecting our interests, go on defining them when any question arises so that we make a friendly march forward to the interior in the great work of civilization and Christianizing the black, if he is willing to become Christianized. The slave trade question in the Red Sea is not the complicated one which most people think it. Those Europeans that have had a long residence are willing to give their experience, so any naval officer new to the business can always get information if he is not too proud to ask for it.

I do not know if the Admiralty bureaucracy publish any hints or information for commanders going to the Red Sea slave cruising, but they might do so and simplify matters. It depends more on the Admiralty by supplying proper ships than anything else, and it is no use and only heart-breaking work for a commander to be sent down to the Red Sea cruising and to have charge of a steamer that will neither sail properly nor steam, unless there is a dead calm, and that he knows is not fast enough to keep up with an ordinary native boat. How many slavers have escaped through this, and many of the owners of the dhows as long as there is a steady north wind blowing laugh at the cruisers on the station, as they are so slow. If the public think that the men-of-war sent to the Red Sea are up to their work they are greatly mistaken; officers and men are, but the ships and boats are not.

One of our cruisers was towed out of the Red Sea during '84-'85 three times as she could not steam against a headwind. Our blockade of the coast for the suppression of the slave trade has been and is now a farce. There is no Intelligence Department and absolutely no sum of money at the disposal



of either the Consul or the naval officers to procure information. There has been a few captures made of boats coming across from Jeddah to take slaves back, and in ten years or more the actual captures of dhows with slave cargoes on board can be counted on the fingers of one hand: not one boat, perhaps, in a thousand has been caught, and when these captures have been made it has been from evidence obtained on shore. What ought to be served out to every officer on the station is a map with the slave routes from the interior, the boat harbours, the wells along the coast, and every information that might prove of use, and a sum of money put at the disposal of the Consul and the senior naval officer for procuring evidence, but only remuneration paid when a capture takes place, or when it was not the fault of the informant that the dhow escaped. It is generally known when slaves are *en route* to the coast; all the tribesmen know the slavers' hiding places, and they make nothing out of the slave-dealers. While the tribesmen had to depend on the slave-dealers for their supplies, which they had to do greatly since 1884, they, of course, could not be expected to give information against those that fed them, but when the tribal ports are opened to commerce there can be no doubt that the tribesmen will be willing to help their true friends, the merchants, to put a stop to the transactions of the enemies of both. I do not think that the tribesmen will say, "Let us have both the slave-dealer and the merchant at our ports so as we can play the one off against the other and get our manufactures cheaper," for what with competition there is no chance of a monopoly at any port, so the merchant cannot dictate his terms to the tribes.

I do not wish for one moment that anyone who reads this should think that I am finding fault and saying unpleasant

things just for the sake of making myself disagreeable, but there has been lately a certain amount of neglect shown in dealing with the slave trade which is not creditable to Englishmen. I don't for one moment wish to attribute any fault to the officers and men that have had the hard work of cruising in one of the hottest climates in the world, and I sympathize with them in all their difficulties. The fault can be traced to the Admiralty for sending and fitting out ships for the station totally useless for the purpose for which they are employed.

If these class of gunboats are not fast enough for slave cruising they are not fast enough to protect our commerce, and I am afraid that the whole of our older gunboats and sloops are only of use in peace time to carry the English flag about, and it is very doubtful if war broke out whether they could get into places of safety in time before many of them were captured. We have many thousands of fighting men in these obsolete ships with their obsolete armaments, and one-quarter of the number of modern gunboats would do the work they do. I don't say there ought to be only a quarter of the number, but it would be more businesslike to have a few good boats than a lot of bad ones.

Fast ships are required, vessels that can steam, not hold their way against a head wind, and not a naval officer will say that craft like the *Falcon*, *Condor*, *Gannet*, *Cygnets*, *Dolphin*, *Coquette*, *Albacore*, *Bittern*, *Beacon*, *Decoy*, &c., &c., and this class of sloop or gun boat that have been employed lately in the Red Sea, are fit to cope with their work. Some of them can do with difficulty ten knots in a calm, but as the usual Red Sea weather is not what may be called calm, and the wind is either blowing strongly from the north or south, the progress these cruisers make through the water

is, average them all round, about five knots. This speed is not enough, and until a faster type of cruisers is used few captures will be made. The naval officer can only be expected to do his duty, and I have heard complaints from nearly every commander of this tenor: "What is the use of sending us here to stop the slave trade? You first put us in vessels that won't steam, you won't aid us to get information, and if we make a mistake and arrest a vessel and we cannot prove slavery against her, we are liable to prosecution for illegal detention, and it is the servant of the nation, and not the nation, that has to pay the damages."

The great mistake that all commanders of cruisers make is that they keep too near and in sight of the Soudan shore of the Red Sea. A man-of-war is a most conspicuous mark and can be seen for miles, and the natives that are engaged in the slave trade have a very perfect system of signals and information, and they generally know the whereabouts and movements of every one of Her Majesty's ships and if they are fast or slow. It is needless to say the head quarters of this espionage is at Suakim; it used to be before the war in Jeddah.

The question of catching slaves becomes a game of skill played between the senior naval officer and the traders. With reliable information and quick cruisers the advantage is all on the side of the naval officers. Now everything is in favour of the others, and so it will be, and no blow can be struck until the public insist on proper ships being sent out, and that they will not grudge the two or three thousand pounds per annum that it will cost to procure the information that will lead to the increased captures.

There is, if one takes a look at the map of the Red Sea,

more chance of making captures off Jeddah and on the south of Hodeidah (where the southern dhows make for) than by cruising off the long bit of coast from Mersa Halaib to Zeilah; and it is not likely that the slave-dealers for some time will use the other ports on the Hedjaz or Arabian side; certainly not until they receive a severe blow by losing a good many dhows, laden with slaves, and then when they alter their routes and the British public will allow information to be paid for, they can again be checkmated by our cruisers.

One slave-dealer hanged for slavery on the coast will do more good than fifty captures, and I wish it to be understood that until a rough and ready justice is meted out to these lawless people no permanent good can be expected. What did Gordon do in the Soudan? I take a couple of his letters to me:—

“Khartoum,  
“19—8—1878.

“MY DEAR WYLDE,

“Thanks for your letter of the 5th August, and the papers, which are very interesting. I have telegraphed about the subsidy to the steamer, and thanks for sending the dhurra. Mind and let me know if you have the slightest bother with Redwan or Aboubekr, Pashas at Berberah and Zeilah, but be just with them and do not take advantage of our friendship. I will walk into them, you may be sure, if they *attempt* to thwart you or your people, for I am extremely angry with Redwan Pasha.

“I have hung one man in Obeid for mutilating a boy, and hope to hang five more in a couple of days. We have caught 17 caravans in three months, and I am now trying to catch a sandjak who, with 80 men, was conveying 400 slaves from Darfur. Rossit met him *en route* and ordered

him to stop. He refused and threatened to fire on him. If I catch him I will hang him.

“Believe me,

“My dear Wylde,

“Yours sincerely,

“C. G. GORDON.”

The dhurra was sent by me to Berberah and Zeilah for Colonel Gordon, as there was a famine there, and Redwan and Aboubekr Pashas had turned corn merchants like Joseph did in Pharaoh's time. The grain arrived unexpectedly at these places and the market fell a hundred per cent., much to the disgust of the Pashas and delight of the people. After the lesson there were no more “rings” started at the expense of the inhabitants. Rossit died on his way to the Sobat, where he and Gessi with a small force were going to try and open up this river and make friends with the Galla people. The expedition did not take place, as Gessi had to go to Darfur to suppress Suleiman Zebehr's insurrection. The sandjak, who was a governor of one of Gordon's districts in Darfur, was caught, tried by a court martial in Khartoum, and hanged.

“Shaka Darfur,

“23rd April, 1879.

“MY DEAR WYLDE,

“Thanks for your kind note, its enclosure from Playfair, and the seeds (cinchona),\* which will be sown in Khartoum. Thanks also for sending the £1,000 and for the dhurra. You never let me know how much I owe you for it. You will hear of the clean sweep made at Cairo of the whole lot. I heard of it last night by telegraph from Cairo, and am heartily glad of it, for the whole gang were an unpractical, square-headed set, with their European ideas and continual importations of new men. What a lot of money

\* Eucalyptus.

that man —— has cost H. H. Why, all these new men will have to be paid off a nice legacy he leaves. However, his light as a financier is out. Your father has never answered my letters; I expect he got them. Gessi has, after eight engagements, routed the revolted slave-dealers, and I hope hourly to hear of the capture and death of the leaders. He has had some heavy fighting. I am rooting them out of these lands; we have caught 71 caravans since June, 1878. If things do not get altered you must try and put a steamer on for Berberah, and (without a longer contract than three months) for £150 a month. I cannot offer with safety a longer time or more money.

“Yours sincerely,

“C. G. GORDON.”

I used to hear from time to time from Colonel Gordon about the slave trade, but where, I may say, I was in such constant communication with him was by telegraph; and many an evening I have spent in the telegraph station, he at one end of the line and I at the other, talking through the clerks on all sorts of subjects. There has not been the chance before nor since to deal with the slave trade as there is at present; but if the Admiralty and the Foreign Office will do their duty there is no reason why in a measurable time the slave trade should not cease to exist. The public must not for one moment think that they are not the volunteers and people who are capable of dealing with the slave-dealers. It is the bonds of red tape—in some cases worse than slave-irons—that prevent action being taken; and there can be but one ending to the question if the Government will only help the merchant, viz., the overthrow of the slave-dealers. The Government need only see that the treaties now made and in their keeping are carried out, send an extra cruiser in the Red Sea

besides the three now there, and let these cruisers be vessels that can steam, instead of the Noah's arks that now do duty.

It is an insult to common sense the way things are being done at present, and no one knows it better than those who have to do the work. The merchant will help to get rid of the slave-dealer, as true trade and slavery can never live side by side. The population of Africa that is being gradually diminished year by year are the people to which the merchants will have to look to purchase their goods. As soon as the merchant can get among the blacks he can help them to protect themselves against the Arab slave-dealers; and with the blacks resisting the raids, and the cruisers, by the aid of an Intelligence Department, capturing the slave-dealers with their slaves just as they are reaching their final destination, will soon make slavery impossible.

As I have said before, the tribes of the Eastern Soudan will, if asked, be glad to help in putting down slavery; and now Italy has Massowah the task becomes easier, as part of the coast is held by a Christian nation. It will be a good thing for humanity at large when the rest of the Soudan coast falls into the hands of another civilized power. The time is now or never to get something done. Russia having taken a great part of the country from which Turkey drew her white slaves, blacks or browns will be more sought after to fill the harems and to do the domestic work; and it will be better at once to insist upon Turkey performing what she has bound herself to do than to allow her to go until she says, "If you will do something else for me, give in on such a point, I will see that the importation of slaves is really put a stop to." With Turkey, I am afraid, we have always made concessions and gone on half-hearted measures, instead of seeing that she carries out, not her promises, but what

she has agreed to in writing. With what our politicians have done in the Soudan it is very much like the kettle calling the pot black, when we ask Turkey to do justice to the African, but there is no reason why the public should not insist on our Foreign Office doing their duty. I do not think that we grumole enough about the details and general management of the great public questions. There is, thank God, a feeling at last that our house is not in order, and a wholesome attempt being made to put our naval and military portions of the construction somewhat into a proper working condition. The public are grumbling that they are not getting their money's worth, and we certainly do not get the information we ought from our Civil Service, who I have nothing to say against individually, although they, on the whole, cannot be congratulated on the work they carry out. A leaf might be taken out of the American Consular Service and their example followed. I am sorry that they have not a Consul in the Red Sea to help in putting down the slave trade; we should then see the Turk wake up and try to do his duty. Our Consuls in the Red Sea, with the brilliant exception of poor Consul Moncrieff, have been mostly of the fossil order, and as the majority of their work is slave work and with the navy, it is a pity that naval officers are not appointed to these posts at Suakim and Jeddah. Their appointment to these posts would be a step in the right direction, especially if men were chosen that had some experience of the slave trade. Let them have fast cruisers to work with, and the public would see a very different result from what there is at present. There is always the question, What is to be done with the slaves when they are caught? The moment the country quiets down it is to be hoped that we will have a branch of the Universities Mission started at Suakim who will



undertake a simple education and teaching the slaves some trade. The Barca Delta will take as many slaves as are caught. There will be no difficulty in getting them remunerative employment working in the cotton fields; they can be employed by the naval forces as stokers and doing cleaning work on board as at present. The police and army will always take some, and there is no reason why when the time comes that they may not return to the interior, and with the discipline that they have undergone, and their having mixed with civilization, they will be able to tell their own countrymen that the European is their friend and will help them against the Arab. The black soon begins to believe in the universal God, and to know the difference between right and wrong. This is enough Christianity for him as a commencement. There are now many hundreds of Bongos, Shilloks, Denkas, and other tribesmen in the Egyptian army. Some of them are most intelligent and are good soldiers. The moment these people get back to their homes they would have the rest of their tribesmen with them, and they could laugh at the slave-dealers as they could make no more raids on their country. I have great hopes that the slaves that have been torn from their homes under Egyptian rule will help in the future to pacify the Soudan and put an end to the slave-dealers. General Gordon, before he left the Soudan, had settled many of the captured slaves down in fertile parts of the country, and it was astonishing what advancement they were making. His successor broke up these colonies, and the people were made slaves again. There is no reason why the tribal people at Tokar should quarrel with any colonies started in the delta, as there is room there for all, and it has always been a district in which all the tribesmen had rights of pasturage

and met on a peaceful footing, and the slave-colony would help the sheiks in clearing the land for cultivation. It is from an ignorance of Arab customs that the Tokar question has been so misjudged by the present Governor-General at Suakim, and he has been guided by what the Suakim people and the slave-dealers say, who are interested parties, and would like to have the whole management of the delta, which they will never get unless the English Government kills off all its inhabitants, which is not likely.

We have now on the Eastern Soudan littoral the following elements to work against the slave trade, and it only wants our Government (or, more strictly speaking, the Foreign Office that governs our Government, no matter to what party it belongs) to say "Trade shall be opened, and we will see that slave-dealing Arabs are punished when cases have been proved against them." The moment the Foreign Office says trade shall be opened the European merchant takes the place of the Arab slave-dealing merchant from Jeddah, and the tribesmen are brought into contact with civilization and legitimate trade, and people that will help him to develop the resources of his country instead of keeping him in ignorance and darkness. We have the Italians, who will be glad to help in opening Africa, and will, no doubt, by defining what they require, have no cause to be jealous of English merchants who are at one with them in wishing to see peace and prosperity, as against war and its devastations and misery. We have King John, who will, from what I know of him, welcome the merchant and the capitalist to trade with his country as long as the merchant confines himself to his legitimate calling and does not seek to alter the religion of his subjects and to intrigue with them.

Abyssinia is the coming country of Africa, with its splendid climate and mineral, natural, and agricultural riches, and its inhabitants with whom it is possible to associate, and are capable of great development. Then there is the Somali country, of which little is known, but its people have a liking for the English, and the Aden Government is looked up to by them all. Lastly, between the Somali country and Zanzibar, there is a new company starting, to which everyone ought to wish success; and there can be no doubt that it has a brilliant future before it if properly managed. It would be a great thing for Africa if Zanzibar could be dealt with and handed over to a civilized power, as the Arab's civilization will never deal with the mainland in a proper manner, and as long as it is in the hands of the Arabs they will always foster the slave trade in one way or another.

Brave Emin Bey, as long as he lives, will form a point round which civilization should rally; and he is a bright example of what one foreigner unaided can accomplish. England's, Italy's, and King John's subjects at peace with the tribesmen would soon settle the Soudan question, and that of the slave trade; but as long as there is no action taken against the purchasers of slaves and those that foster the trade, so long will there be victims to the cause of civilization and liberty. We have had enough horrors in the Soudan to satisfy everyone; let us have a new departure and finish once and for all the wicked idea of trying to reconquer the Soudan for Egypt, or allowing the military to keep up the policy that is now being carried on, which only tends towards bloodshed. Egypt's best neighbour is a friendly Soudan; they cannot reconquer it by force of arms, but it is to be reconquered by trade, and its inhabi-

tants are to be made friendly, and will themselves deal with Mahdism and the slave trade as long as they know they are not to be handed back to the hated Egyptian rule. It is impossible for the English military officer as long as he puts the tarbush on his head to talk to the tribesmen. He, therefore, stands on his dignity, and gets angry if a civilian tries to step in between and bring about a reconciliation. What England refuses to do for civilization and commerce, Italy will only be too glad to perform, and, before long, British merchants will make overtures to Italians to help them settle a question which is rightly England's duty to see carried out.

There are no responsibilities that can follow by dealing honestly with the Soudan and confining English interests to the coast; complications are likely to arise by neglecting and failing to deal with the question in a manly and straightforward manner. In God's name let us have a settlement of the question, and try to make some reparation for the amount of blood-guiltiness we have on our hands, and by our future behaviour strive to wash away the stain that disgraces the name of England in her dealings with the Soudan during the last few years.

## APPENDIX.

### I.

#### THE RED SEA TRADE.\*

IN this paper the question of the whole trade of the Red Sea cannot be entered into, as it would be too long and perhaps too uninteresting. The time has not come when the interior from the eastern coast of the Red Sea can be exploited, and with the exception of a few unimportant European houses at Jeddah and Hodeidah there are no other centres of trade where a European can reside.

The glories of old Mocha have gone, and the town is in ruins. There are hardly 300 souls living there, when but a few years ago it was a busy, thriving city of nearly 20,000 inhabitants. At all ports in the Red Sea, and wherever the Turk has been, trade has declined and industries have been put a stop to, and were it not for the fact that Moslems of other nations are interested in Mecca and Medina there would be no trade at all in the Hedjaz. The inhabitants of the Hedjaz are kept alive by the yearly pilgrimage. If it was put a stop to they would have to migrate, or return to the more fertile parts of Arabia, where the Turkish Government cannot follow. The other parts on

\* Read at Manchester to the British Association, 1887.

the eastern side are taking from the north. El Wedge, which trades with its opposite port ; Cosseir, which exchanges grain for the produce of the Bedouin flocks. El Wedge is Egyptian.

Yembo, the seaport town of Medina, exports a few skins, dates in large quantities, but of the amount per annum there is no return—these are shipped to Jeddah, Cosseir, and the Soudan littoral—a little gum, and a few mother-o'-pearl shells, and a few drugs that find their way to Jeddah. Yembo takes grain, rice, and wheat—mostly from Jeddah—which arrive from the Persian Gulf, Bombay, and Calcutta ; and Manchester cloth and hardware from England, imported through Jeddah ; sugar from the Continent, and wheat from Cosseir. Rabagh, about half way between Yembo and Jeddah, exports a little mother-o'-pearl shells, and the produce of the flocks belonging to the neighbouring tribes. Near this port one of the pilgrim roads runs from Mecca to Medina, and for the last few years it has been made use of, on account of the disturbances among the tribes on the direct route from Mecca to Medina. Then comes the port of Jeddah, that takes trade of all kinds from England, the Continent, Persian Gulf, India, and Singapore, except machinery and plant to develop the country ; and exports only skins, gum, and mother-o'-pearl shells in large quantities. There is absolutely no reliance to be placed on the Jeddah customs returns. The imports are, of course, very large, as it is the great centre market for the Hedjaz, and cloth and goods go as far as Nejd in the interior. All food supplies are imported, and the balance between the exports and imports is made up from the dollars left behind by the pilgrims.

Then South, Leet, that takes food-stuffs from Jeddah, and returns gums, skins, and mother-o'-pearl shells. Then Confidah, that does the same trade as Leet, with the addition

that in a rainy autumn or early winter it exports to Jeddah a little dhurra and duccan (native grains).

Then the port of Loheyah, that has exactly the same trade as Confidah, and also exports the before-named native grains, but draws its supplies from Hodeidah. Then the port of Hodeidah, that has taken the place of Mocha, which exports—besides coffee, hides, skins, dhurra, and duccan—gum, drugs, and mother-o'-pearl shells. The coffee mostly finds its way to the continental markets, and is much adulterated with low kinds of coffee from the Ceylon and Malabar coast. In exchange for the exports, Manchester and Birmingham goods are taken, and Indian produce—and especially rice. I just touch on the trade of the eastern Red Sea littoral, as it was associated with the trade of the Soudan; and before the Suez Canal was opened, Hodeidah used to be the mart for a good deal of the Southern Soudan trade—say, from Tajurrah to a little north of Massowah; Jeddah, from Aghig at the south of the Barca Delta, Tokar, Suakim, and Roweyah.

Hodeidah and Jeddah merchants are nearly all slave-dealers, and the goods for the expeditions into the Soudan used to leave these ports to points on the Soudan coast, and, naturally, the direction of the return goods and slave caravans tended towards these two ports. On the opening up of the two ports of Massowah and Suakim to European trade, which dates from about 1872 only, the ten years from 1872 till 1882 entirely did away with the importance of Jeddah and Hodeidah as marts for Soudan produce; and in 1882—just as the Mahdi's troubles commenced—there only remained to them a slave trade, a little ivory, ostrich feathers, gold and gold dust, and musk, very valuable property and not bulky, that could be carried with the slave caravans, and it was the only way that the slave merchants could exist and make profits by buying the high-class produce

in the Soudan markets, and their slaves were used as transport; and on these slaves the greater profits were realized, leaving also a profit on the ivory, which was contraband, being a Government monopoly. These merchants could always outbid the merchants that did legitimate trade for gold dust and ostrich feathers, and they used to run up the price of Soudan produce with no intention of buying it, so as to spoil the profits of the representatives of the houses that did legitimate trade. The Egyptian officials, being naturally corrupt, did not take any notice of the slave-dealers, who they well knew, and with but few exceptions no officials cared to help or improve the position of legitimate traders in the Soudan. As there has been no trade from Suakim from 1883 to 1887, and a half-hearted blockade of the coast only kept up, the merchants of the Jeddah side of the Red Sea have been doing a large smuggling trade, and there being no one to put a stop to slavery in the Soudan the slave trade has again greatly increased, and slaves were never so cheap at Hodeidah and Jeddah as they are now. This shows the sympathy between the merchants on the Arabian side with the Soudan rebels, and, even when the late General Gordon was Governor-General, how hard it was for him to put a stop to the slave trade, and how the agents of the slave-dealers and their correspondents were scattered throughout every province in the Soudan. It is against these slave-dealers that the great difficulty in future will be to open up trade with the interior of the Soudan.

The state of the Soudan Red Sea littoral has been in the last few years an ever-changing one, and has been complicated by the apathy of the home officials. The Egyptian Government claimed the coast from Cape Guardafui to Suez. Its rule has gone from the Somali coast. From Cape Guardafui to Zeilah the coast is under English protection, with officials at Berberah



and Zeilah. Tajurrah and Oback are in the hands of the French. The Italians, who only had the small settlement at Assab Bay, claim now the whole of the coast from opposite Perim round Annesley Bay to Massowah, and again north of Massowah to Mersa Mobarack, quite close to Aghig. The only part of the coast that is now in the hands of the Egyptian Government, and which they do not properly patrol, is from Aghig to Mersa Halaib. From Cape Elba the coast past Cosseir to Suez is supposed to be under Egypt proper, and not under the Soudan command, consequently the supervision north of Mersa Halaib is *nil*, and on the littoral now left, the Soudan Government—viz., from Aghig to Mersa Halaib—the patrol is a farce. Trade is not encouraged—on the contrary, every obstacle is thrown in its way—and to write a paper only on existing trade is impossible, as at present trade does not exist. I shall touch on what the trade was, and what it will be again as soon as things quiet down, which would be at once if the experience of those that have been in the country for any length of time were taken, instead of following—which is being done now—an impossible policy, and using means distasteful to the neighbouring tribes.

The trade points recognized in former times were three only, Roweyah, Suakim, and Massowah in the Red Sea, and Berberah, Zeilah, and Tajurrah outside the Red Sea littoral; but as these three latter ports are not strictly Soudan ports, I will confine myself to the former. Roweyah, the most northern port, is situated in the Bay of Roweyah, which has a depth of about eighteen miles, and is in no place more than five miles wide. The salt pans at Roweyah are situated about three miles from the cape of Ras Roweyah, on the inner beach of the bay. The salt is formed by evaporation, and by the falling of the sea during the summer months. The pans are flooded for about

four months in the year—say from November to February. Percolation goes on during the summer months, as the level of the bed of the salt pans in its lower part is just under that of the sea at its lowest summer level, and as soon as the salt is cleared away, in a few days another deposit is formed, so the supply is nearly inexhaustible. As much as 60,000 tons have been taken from these fields in a season. The pans cover an area of about 1,800 yards in length, by about 400 to 800 yards in breadth. The working is primitive in the extreme. The salt is scraped together, put into baskets, and carried on donkey-back a distance of from six to 2,000 yards to the beach, where it is put into canoes, and then transhipped to lighters, which sail down to the anchorage where the steamers lay, which is about nine miles away. Since the fields have been worked no improvements have been made. The Europeans who have worked the fields on lease, conjointly with native partners, also have made no improvements, and carried on the work in the old style. With better appliances more salt might be taken, and at a very reduced cost. The salt is shipped to Calcutta.

There being no fresh water at Roweyah, it is always impossible its ever becoming a place of importance, and will only be used by the labourers and boatmen during the season. Most of the labour is imported from Jeddah and Suakim. The headland of Roweyah belongs to the Balcab Bishareen tribe, whose headquarters are situated at the top of the bay, at Dongonab, which supplies Roweyah with fresh water. A little further south, and nearly at the commencement of the bay, and opposite Macowa Island, is the settlement of Mahomed Ghoul, called after a native who traded there some century or more ago. It is not marked on the chart, but is about two miles south of Baidib. Mahomed Ghoul belongs to the Kourbab Huwon tribe, a branch of the great Amarar tribe, and it is at

this settlement where the merchants live and all business transactions are decided—the steamers and sailing vessels taking salt from Roweyah anchor about two miles off this place. The trade of Mahomed Ghoul formerly used during the season to be pretty considerable; however, no statistics were kept of what was really exported or imported.

The export of salt, and the steamers, brought a certain amount of work to the place, and made a concentration of the neighbouring tribes, which consisted of the Bishareen and Amarar sub-tribes, the former mostly Balcabs, Shanterabs, and Ahmed Orabs, and the latter Kourbabs, Kelabs, Erfoiabs, etc. A good many of these tribes used to work during the season, and on return to the mountains and districts used to invest their earnings in cloth and sundry little things to take back with them to their countries to barter. The trade of Mahomed Ghoul was always what might be called a petty one of barter, with the exception of with the Bishareen, who used at last to draw their supplies from Roweyah in preference to Assouan or Korosko, as they could get their Manchester goods cheaper; and the Jaleen used also to bring their slave caravans to the neighbourhood, as it was the shortest and best route to Jeddah, and where they were never molested, not a single capture having ever been made. The trade of the port used to consist of the import of rice from India, dhurra from the Persian Gulf and India, dates from Yembo and the Persian Gulf, Indian-Soudan goods of dark and red native cloth for women's dresses, essential oils, drugs, native beds, small things for barter, tobacco, sugar, mostly from Marseilles, *via* Jeddah, and Manchester cloth of all sorts, except the finest of cottons and linens. The cloth was of all sorts, from the heavier sorts used in the mountains in cold weather to the lightest descriptions and tanjibs used during the heat of summer.

The difference in temperature between the heat of summer and the cold nights of winter in the northern plains is immense, the Erba mountains, mostly inhabited by the Kelab and Kourbab Sadounab tribes, being nearly uninhabitable during the winter months on account of the severe cold. At about 3,000 feet I found—in the month of November last, in the Erba mountains—great difficulty in sleeping at nights on account of the cold; and one night, when I camped out at a rather higher range so as to be on the ibex ground by daylight, I could not sleep at all. The more mountainous the country, like that near the sea-coast and also further north, the more various are the demands for heavier and lighter cloths, according to the season. The Erba mountains must not be confounded with the Elba mountains, which are still further north, and are inhabited by the Bishareen tribes only, with an occasional visit from the Ababdehs—the nearest true Soudan tribes to Egypt proper.

The exports from Roweyah were formerly sheep and goat-skins dried, sheep and goat-skins tanned, wool, hair, bark of a mountain mimosa used for dye, ghee or native butter, sheep, goats, charcoal, mother-o'-pearl shells, and a little gum, senna, and interior produce, brought down by the slave-dealers. As before, the future of Mahomed Ghoul will always be the Roweyah salt pans and the petty flock produce of the neighbouring tribes. There is absolutely no cultivation now worth speaking about, but after heavy rain a little dhurra and ducan is grown in the Yemena valley, three miles from Mahomed Ghoul; and the damper and lower ground grows a few water melons and vegetables.

There is an unlimited and good supply of water at Hardi, nine miles off, and at Yemena and Bela two wells in the valleys that run from the mountains. It is brackish, although the

water comes from the same source as at Hardi. I find, wherever I have been along the coast, that as soon as the lower plains are reached—which all show an old coral formation, and that in former ages they were submerged—the water is not good, while at the foot of the mountains the water is nearly always good; that there are springs and pools in some places on the sea beach which during summer—as far as the taste of the water is concerned—cannot be distinguished from salt water, although immediately after the rains in winter it is a trifle less salt; and it is a most curious thing that, although the water is so salt, impossible for human beings to drink, all animals—camels, cows, goats, sheep, and gazelle, as well as birds—drink it and thrive on it. The Erba mountains have not been surveyed, nor have Europeans been over them, so it is unknown if they contain geological riches. I found traces of copper, marble, and porphyry; and in the Elba mountains there is plenty of green marble and alabaster. The future of Mahomed. Ghoul and the district will greatly improve if the Roweyah salt pans are taken out of the hands of native contractors and given over to Europeans, who will improve the primitive manner of winning and shipping the salt, so as to put it free on board at the lowest possible price, and to be able to compete with the Italian salt from Cagliari, which has to pay canal dues, and which sells at the same price as Roweyah salt at Calcutta.

We will now touch on the trade of Suakim before the Mahdi's outbreak in the Soudan in 1882, when the trade of Suakim was in its zenith, and when the camels of the country could no more cope with the trade, and the only means left to develop the country and deal with the merchandise was a small or metre gauge railway between Suakim and Berber. There was a great deal said on both sides that the railway would never have paid, but the argument for the railway paying was

a great deal stronger than the argument put forward by those chiefly representing Cairo interests, who were all against it, as they looked upon the Suakim route once opened up as being the death blow to their Soudan trade and their Boulac Soudan market, and to the cherished hope of Ismail Pasha—viz., the whole of the Soudan trade being carried down the Nile through Cairo—the wildest and most chimerical scheme that had ever been put before him. The youngest office boy in Manchester, with the least rudiments of geography, having been shown the two routes, and being told to take a parcel to Berber from England, would have taken the Suakim road in preference to that *viâ* Cairo and the Nile. I have often heard General Gordon quoted that he wanted to carry out Ismail Pasha's ideas of continuing the Nile railway. What he wanted to do was at any cost to get quick communications for governing purposes, and to try and utilize the thousands of pounds that had already been wasted; and his was a military idea, and not a commercial one. Military communications are possible, as there is no question of expense; with commercial communications time and cost have always to be reckoned, and the route *viâ* Suakim has been entirely proved as the one, and the only one, that fulfils these two points. This was known to the military officials in Cairo before the Gordon Relief Expedition started, but it was unpopular with the Egyptian officials in power, who ought never to have been listened to by the home authorities, and have followed the merchant, who to attain his end always chooses the quickest and cheapest routes by which to send merchandise, and to follow out the Manchester maxim of small profits and quick returns. The battle of routes commenced first in about 1875-6, and was but a short and decisive struggle, which entirely settled the question in favour of Suakim and Berber against that of Alexandria, Cairo, Nile,

and Korosko route. Produce leaving Manchester *viâ* Suez Canal arrived at Suakim as soon as produce from Manchester could be put at Siout, and at a considerably lower cost. Then from Siout the produce had to be transhipped to the Nile craft, then the time expended on the voyage to Korosko, against stream, and then the very difficult and waterless track from there across the desert, with the exception of the Murad wells, to Abou Hammed, then to Berber—a longer and more expensive route than the perfectly easy route for transport-camels from Suakim to Berber. One was cheapness and despatch, the other costly and delay. From the settlement of the question in favour of Suakim, the Cairo merchants, backed by the Government—as may be said—died hard; and the Government authorities carried on their absurd theory of routes up to 1883, when they still insisted that their ivory—their Government monopoly—should come down the Nile instead of *viâ* Suakim. Part of the ivory was sold at Khartoum to private firms, which was shipped *viâ* Berber and Suakim, and arrived in London in less than six weeks from Khartoum, and was sold six months before the Government ivory, *viâ* the Nile, arrived in London.

The water question on routes is also one that is of great interest to commercial people; and as far as my experience, since 1874-5, extends there is absolutely no water difficulty, nor ever has been, on the Suakim-Berber route. There is ample supply from Suakim to Ariab, and even in the warmest of summer weather, with the heaviest loads, in the sections between Ariab and Obak and Obak and Mohebe, say in round figures about fifty miles each, a quick half-section was done. The animals returned to Ariab to drink, they then fed quietly back to where their loads were left, went on another day's march, left their loads again, then went on to Obak to drink, returned, and

brought their loads to Obak. The same was done on the other section to Mohebe. From Mohebe to Berber is about eight miles. In winter this need not be done, as camels can go through without watering. These sections might be improved, as it is only a question of sinking wells, which never has been done, and the Arabs are a great deal too lazy themselves to improve their routes. There is one very bad piece of the road, namely, the moving sand dunes of Obak—hillocks of soft sand—the surface of which is constantly changing with the northerly and southerly winds. The wells at Obak are bad, and over 80ft. deep, the water bitter, and not in large quantities during the hot weather. The sand dunes can be got round by proceeding north and turning them. This is a longer but a better road. That water might be found on this road, and wells sunk, is a certainty. The valleys from Ariab and the drainage of the country slope to the Nile. Ariab, say, is 1,900ft. above the sea level and 800ft. above the Nile level. Mohebe is about 1,250ft., where there is water, and in the same system of drainage. At Mohebe and Ariab water is plentiful. Taking the difference of height at 650ft. between the two ends of this section, and that the slope is a gradual one, water ought to be found, and at not great depths. The question of wheel traffic I settled during General Hicks's expedition, when Krupp guns, with six mules, were wheeled over the desert to Berber in fourteen days. On the first section of the road from Suakim to Tambuck a great deal of water was found by the 1885 expedition, and there is no reason why, with a little expense in sinking wells, the water supply might not be greatly improved.

By the old system, before the war broke out, and when the country was at peace, Suakim was the emporium for nearly the whole of the Soudan trade *via* Berber, for that of Gedarif,



Gallabat, and Taka *viâ* Cassala, and for that of the Tokar district and Habab country. We then had the Jaleens—the petty pedlars of the Soudan—coming down to Suakim, and representatives of the principal tribes—Bishareens, Amarars, Hadendowies, Beni-Amers, Shukeriyeh, and the sub-tribes of Tokar people, that years ago have intermarried with the tribes from Arabia, and have lost their peculiar type of feature, and are hardly to be distinguished from Hadendowie or Amarar.

The produce shipped from Suakim consisted of ivory, gums of different sorts; that from Darfur and Kordofan being of the best quality, to the inferior growths from Kedarif, Gallabat district, to near down to the Galla country; coffee from the middle Abyssinian hills, Gallabat district, and Galla country; gold from above Sennaar and the Galla country; musk, senna, and ostrich feathers from Darfur and Kordofan; hides from the Beni-Amer country and Cassala; sheep and goat skins from the neighbouring tribes; indiarubber from the White Nile; simsim or gingelly seed for oils from Taka district; cotton from Tokar, grown on the fertile Barca Delta, and other small produce of the country, such as drugs, dyes, &c.; sheep and cattle to Egypt and Arabia; mother-o'-pearl shells and tortoiseshell.

In exchange, Manchester cloth of all sorts was sent up country, the kinds and patterns varying constantly, according to the fashion of the country and its position; rice, sugar, candles, soap, hardware of all sorts, liquors of every description, Birmingham goods and cutlery, Indian cloth and silks, drugs, essences, furniture, Bombay manufactured cottons and prints, tea, oilman's stores, wood for building purposes, metals, and, in fact, all general trade, but no machinery or things of heavy weight. The majority of the goods were forwarded to Berber, Khartoum, and to the interior *viâ* the Suakim and Berber

route, and to Cassala, where the goods were again forwarded to Kedarif and Gallabat.

The trade of the interior of the Soudan was mostly carried on by Greeks and Arabs, agents for houses at Suakim and Khartoum. The Khartoum houses had agents at Berber to forward their goods. At Cassala there were also agents of the Suakim houses that did the forwarding work to the interior. The larger native traders used to come into the centres of trade and sell their goods for money, and then buy their return commerce from the cheapest house. They all show a very keen sense of trade, and thoroughly know how to take care of themselves. The trade just before the insurrection was rapidly falling into the hands of the Europeans, who, by shipping direct from London, could compete with and undersell the Arab merchants, who still adhered to the complicated way of getting their goods through Alexandria, Cairo, Suez, and Jeddah. There was not a European house that did not suffer a great deal by their losses when war broke out, which losses will never be got back, nor is there any chance of compensation or for the five years' loss of trade. I may make the remark that robbery and petty theft of goods were hardly known in the Soudan. Loads were left on the side of the road without any guardians, and the contents were never tampered with, which says a great deal for the honesty of the natives, and on sending specie up country it was the custom to send for a camelman, and say to him, "These are boxes of dollars. What do you want to take them either to Berber or Cassala?" as the case might be. He would say his price, and the half-naked Arab used to leave the office with the specie, and in course of time used to return with a receipt for payment, and it has never been known that a single dollar was lost. The same was done with Government money, which was seldom accompanied by a specie-guard of

any strength; but at all times the merchant always could send his away without a single guard, while the Government could not. The natives seemed proud of the trust placed in them, and never abused it.

The Tokar district and trade was always a paying one, and it is the only place that I know where cotton grows without irrigation and with such little cultivation. From the rains in the Hamasen province in North Abyssinia, and the drainage of the Habab mountains, the Barca river is formed. The rains first commence in the Hamasen, and the Ainseba river, from a series of detached pools and springs, becomes a torrent, and runs down and joins the Barca in the Beni-Amer country. The rains commence in the month of July, and by the end of the month the first water finds its way to the Barca Delta. According to the amount of rain up country depends to what extent the ground in the Barca Delta is saturated. The Barca never runs for more than four or five days together consecutively. By the middle of September the water ceases to run, and the ground is then cleared of weeds and the cotton seed put in the ground. With the exception of keeping the cotton free of weeds, everything is left to nature till the cotton is ripe for plucking, and sometimes not a single shower of rain falls from the middle of September till the gathering of the first ripe pods commences, late in December. By the middle of February the whole of the cotton is gathered. The acreage of good ground there is estimated at from 300,000 to 500,000 acres, growing on an average about four to six hundredweight of cotton per acre. The quality of the cotton grown is generally Ashmouni, the seed of which is procured from Egypt. The cotton is ginned and pressed at Suakim, and could machinery be sent to Trinkitat, Aghig, or to Tokar, expenses would be much less. The cost of cotton in Liverpool, of course, varies,

so will the proceeds of the cotton shipped from Tokar, but the cotton grown there averages, as a rule, from a halfpenny to a penny per pound more than what Egyptian Ashmouni fetches.

The ground at Tokar belongs to the sheiks, who cultivate on joint account, as a rule, with the Europeans—that is to say, they enter into an agreement to give the ground free of rent, and the Europeans find the cotton seed and advance all the money, cloth, rice, dhurra, tobacco, and everything that is required, at market prices, payment for which is made out of the sheiks' half-share of the crop. The sheik is bound to sell to the European as long as the latter bids as high for his half-share as others do. The cotton is sold to the highest bidder, and the European has a lien on the cotton for his advances. Disputes seldom arose, and both parties were satisfied. Dhurra in large quantities is also grown at Tokar, and nearly the whole Soudan littoral used to be fed from this district for a certain period of the year. There is always a second crop of dhurra, smaller than the first, that springs up after the February rains.

The Barca Delta was not properly opened up before the war, the attention of European merchants only being drawn to it about 1880, when cotton commenced to be more grown than formerly; and had the insurrection not taken place, by this time there would have been enough capital found by Europeans to have put the majority of the acreage under cultivation. Some of the Barca Delta is very fertile, owing to the great depth of deposit, and grows up to ten hundredweight per acre. No manure is ever used. From September to February representatives of nearly every Soudan eastern tribe find their way to this district to get employment in either cotton or dhurra growing, and to feed their cattle on the rich grass that springs up. They return in February and March to their districts. Tokar is

healthy from September to April, but very hot in May, June, and July, the dust during these months and the simoom making it difficult for Europeans to live there. Greeks, however, manage to remain the whole year round. There are only a few other cultivated parts of the Eastern Soudan, and these are of small and insignificant acreage, the largest being Duroor in Khor Arbart. This valley runs from Odrus on the Suakim-Berber route, and runs into the sea at Duroor, about fifty miles north of Suakim, and takes the drainage of the hills round Singat.

In the mountains above Suakim there are two hill stations, the nearer and better of the two being Erkoweet, which is in every way superior to Singat. At Singat there is little or no vegetation, and not much water. At Erkoweet the vegetation is very fine—peaches, grapes, pomegranates, lemons, limes, and the orange will grow, with nearly every tropical and European vegetable. There are also running streams nearly the whole year round, not running streams of our country, but water a few inches deep running in the beds of the valleys, the water alternately making little pools and then losing itself in the sand. Erkoweet is about thirty-five miles from Suakim, and its height above the sea makes it a good summer residence, the nights being always cool.

Of course, it is hard to say what the exact state of the country between Berber and Khartoum now is, and it cannot be expected, after what has passed, and what is now going on, that the neighbouring country has improved, or that cultivation is going on. When I was at Khartoum, in 1878, through the beneficial government of the late Gordon Pasha there was again a decided influx of people to the banks of the Nile to recommence cultivation, and the old water wheels were being repaired and new ones built. The country round Berber, Ad Damer, Schendy,

Metemneh, and Khartoum, all of which I visited, showed signs of coming prosperity, and indigo, dhurra, native grains of all sorts, beans, lentils, onions, etc., were being grown. The ground is every bit as good as that of the Nile Delta, and only wants irrigating to grow good crops, more than sufficient for the wants of the people.

At Massowah there was nearly the same trade done as there was at Suakim, with one different feature, however, viz., the trade of Abyssinia, which is essentially one of barter. The Abyssinians brought down ivory, gold, ox hides in large quantities, dried and tanned, beeswax, musk, ghee, and all produce of the flocks, coffee in large quantities, native woven cloth for local sales, drugs, furs, etc., and took back general African trade. It seems a pity that from 1868 this country has never seemed to enjoy any long spell of peace, so that King John could turn his attention to the development of his country. It took him from 1869 till 1872 to consolidate his country, and during that time little trade went on; in 1872 it commenced to improve, and more so in 1873; in 1874, Egyptian intrigues brought about an invasion, and trade was stopped during the end of 1874, the whole of 1875, and most of 1876. In 1877 it commenced again, and gradually improved from that till 1883, when by the joint intrigues of the Egyptian officials and looting Abyssinian caravans on Egyptian territory, a stoppage of trade again took place, and Ras Aloula, the Abyssinian general, had to chastise the Egyptian irregulars. In December, 1883, I arranged for trade again to take place, and in June, 1884, peace and a treaty was signed between Egypt, King John, and England; from that time till February of this year all went on well, and the trade was an ever-increasing one, although Italy, when she took over Massowah, severely handicapped English trade, and entirely did away with the treaty and agreements

entered into. Now the blockade is put on by the Italians, there is an entire cessation of commerce, and all the hopes of the merchants, who thought the Abyssinian question was settled for ever, are dashed to the ground by the unwarrantable breaking by Italy of the treaty of June, 1884. It is of the utmost importance to English commerce that English merchants should be on the same footing as others at Massowah, and that the millions of money spent over Abyssinia and the pioneering of English merchants should not be lost, when the present king is only too glad to encourage trade in every way, and be friendly with the English. There are grand fields for English enterprise in the country. The country has not been exploited. India-rubber, for example, grows in large quantities, and the hockey-balls used by children are all made of indiarubber found in the country. Coffee grows wild, without the drawback of leaf disease. Every tropical and European grain grows in the country according to altitude and the peculiar grain, Téf of two sorts, giving a brown and a very white flour, which might suit damp and poor soils in Ireland, as it grows and thrives well up to a height of 10,000 feet. The Abyssinians love finery and the gauds of this world, but are not so lazy as the plain Arabs. The peasants and farmers are hard working, and there is no reason, now that the country is united, why it should not make rapid commercial strides. As long as King John's confidence lasts in the English, which it still does, as he knows we have no intention of annexation, a good and safe trade might be done under his guarantee and patronage. The Italians never can do this, and they are annexing and annoying King John. The same may be said of the Soudan. By far the largest number of the Soudanese would come in and trade; and once they commenced trading they would fight for and protect their rights. I have been intimately acquainted with the Soudan

for more than twelve years, and from May last year till quite lately have been out among the tribes who are avowedly unfriendly to the Egyptian Government, as long as conquest is thought of. I have been to places where no Egyptian official has ever been, and have been treated with the utmost courtesy and hospitality, and what every sheik and everyone requires seems to be—leave us alone, don't try and retax us. We shall be glad to see anyone who likes to come, and we guarantee your safety. We will trade with you wherever and whenever you like.

A short *résumé*, and I will finish this paper. What has gone can never return ; and it is useless throwing mud and saying it was So-and-So's fault, and such would have been different if such-and-such a thing had been done. What we have to look at is the future. The Soudanis have been no worse than the mutineers in India, and let a general amnesty be granted, with the exception of those who have committed murder. Throw open the country to trade, and do not insist as heretofore that everyone must come to Suakim to trade. Foster trade by granting facilities and opening tribal ports, which will do away with the continuation of blood feuds, and do more to pacify the country than anything else. Then Bishareen need not be compelled to mix with Amarar or Hadendowie, Amarar with Hadendowie, or Hadendowie with Beni Amer, or one with the other. There will be no question of one tribe having to pass through another tribe's territory, and every tribe will be able to look out after its own commerce and country, and it remains with them whether they choose to improve their country or not. I think they will.

I should make Mersa Halaib, which is the coolest and best summer station on the coast in the Red Sea, and which is highly spoken of by the naval authorities, the port for the



Bishareen tribe. Then Roweyah—or, more strictly speaking, Mahomed Ghoul—the port for the Northern Amarars. Suakim to be the depôt and great commercial port and emporium, where goods for the interior, to Berber, etc., will eventually go from, and where goods will leave coastwise to the tribal ports. Suakim will be used from the N.W. by the Amarars and from the S.W. by the Hadendowies. Their roads only join at Suakim.

Aghig Seghir or Trinkitat, whichever is fixed on by the tribes as the outlet of the Barca Delta, will be another port. If the latter port, it will be nearly entirely a Hadendowie one, and if the former, which might be called a mixed one, taking in Hadendowie, Beni Amer, and Tokar tribes (between the former and the latter there is no chance of fighting), and if the Beni Amers cannot get on with their neighbours, Mersa Mobarack, a port further south, might be opened.

In time, I think that both Aghig Seghir and Trinkitat might be opened with advantage, as one or two ginning mills will not be sufficient to cope with the Tokar cotton crops, and the cotton ground is favourably situated by distance from each port. Aghig Seghir, as far as fresh water is concerned, has the preference, as fresh water is nearer to it.

This scheme being carried out along the coast would satisfy tribal demands, and open up the coast in a practical manner, and would give every facility to Her Majesty's cruisers for obtaining information regarding the slave trade, and would make captures an easy matter, which are most difficult at present.

I do not wish it understood that I am at present an advocate for any railway scheme. The first thing to be done is to get back trade, and when transport becomes impossible, and the camels not able to cope with the trade, then a railway, as a matter of course, will follow to develop the trade. As the

majority of the camels in the Eastern Soudan have been killed off, a railway may be wanted quicker than what people think for. All Soudan experts will say one thing—that to develop the Soudan a railway must take place, sooner or later, as the Nile must be navigated by steam. As there is no wood left, and wood as a fuel in a country with very few trees would not suit a commercial company, either coal or petroleum would have to be used. Coal can be put down at Suakim at 23s., and the cost at Berber need not be more than 45s. Coal, of course, stows better than wood, and with modern steamers, drawing very little water, the Nile between Berber and Khartoum can be navigated by steamers all the year round. The steamers that used to run on the Nile carried very little cargo, could go no distance on account of the wood question, were slow, and drew too much water. With economical engines, steamers running from Berber could reach Lardo on the White Nile and Abou Harraz on the Blue Nile without coaling—what they could not take in their bunkers they might take in flats towed behind. To open up the Soudan, steamers and machinery are required, and these cannot be carried across the desert without a railway.

It remains in the hands of the merchants of England, and especially the manufacturers of Manchester, if they are willing to exploit the country, and insist on getting some return for the lives of British subjects, and the money of the British public that has been spent. I do not say for one moment expend one soldier more over the Soudan, but look at the question in a calm and impartial manner, whether it is possible to find the officials at home that will work pacification and humour the inhabitants of the Soudan. Listen to their just complaints, respect their prejudices, and if those officials can be found the public must insist that they shall be sent out.

Among the Soudanese there is no personal ill-feeling for

Englishmen. They respect our bravery and our honesty of dealing with them, and they would make as valuable friends as they have made plucky enemies; and the most wicked thing that could be done would be to help to hand them back to their old Egyptian or Turkish rulers, whom they detest and despise.

It remains with the Manchester manufacturers whether they can combine to get trade open, and if so to make use of their opportunity to manufacture cloth for the wants of the Soudan, and to try and deal direct with the natives instead of through middlemen. They will find the natives willing to come direct to their representatives with their produce.

Allowing the Soudan question to drift on is a bad policy. It can be settled at once, and a new beginning made, and work will again be found for many people both at home and in the Soudan; and with a fair but firm policy the Soudan will soon cease to be a source of annoyance, and it will be another outlet for trade.

A. B. WYLDE.

Jeddah, 12th August, 1887.

## APPENDIX.

### II.

#### EASTERN SOUDAN—GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

UP till now there is very little known of the whole geography of the Eastern Soudan, and if one takes any of the maps published the names of the places marked are few and far between. The last Intelligence Department's map of the Suakim-Berber route is correct in every detail, and this road is the only well-known one into the interior. After this comes the route to Cassala, of which more information is required, and the question of the drainage from the group of Erkoweet Mountains, south of Suakim, is also unsettled.

That the sources of the Barca are indisputably situated in the North Hamasen, and they join the Ainseba, which runs into the Barca, and then fertilizes the Tokar Delta, there can be no doubt.

The natives say that the Gash, which rises in South Hamasen and runs past Cassala during the heaviest rainy seasons, also runs into the Barca, as well as getting rid of its waters *via* the Atbara. There is no European information to this effect. It may be simply that Europeans have never been in this part of the country during the rains. That the Wady Langheb runs to the Atbara there can be no question, and also the drainage of the mountains round Erkoweet on the south-west. The watershed between the Langheb and the Barca is therefore a vexed question.

The mountains of Singat drain across the Suakim-Berber road, and the outflow joins the sea by the way of Khor Odrus and Khor Arbat

at Mersa Duroor. Erkoweet is nearly due S.S.W. from Suakim; Singat S.W.S. The next group of large mountains northwards of Suakim are the Jebel Asortriba, the southern drainage from which runs out at the head of the harbour of Sheik Barghut, *vid* Khor Mog, and the northern drainage, on joining the plains, runs down Wady Misrar, which also empties itself partly in the Khor Arbat, and also runs into the sea between Sheik Barghut and Mersa Duroor.

The next group of mountains north of Asortriba are the magnificent peaks of Melagueb, Orda, and Bowartie, the eastern drainage from which joins the sea at Mersa Awi-Teri and its neighbouring harbour of Mersa Arakeyyah, *vid* the large Khor Gara-Era. The great drainage from these mountains runs due west for many miles down the very big and little-known valley of Wady Haiet, which runs westerly till between the longitude of Kokred and Ariab, and then makes a sharp turn and runs north, till it at last empties itself in the sea between Berenice and Cosseir. There is very little known of the district of Berenice, but I am told that there are ruins of old stone buildings to be traced all the way from Berenice, down the Wady Haiet past Ariab to Rowai, and doubtless when the country is explored it will be found that the old road from the ruins and pyramids of Meroe crossed the Atbara in the direction of Rowai, and then followed the Wady Hatet to the sea at Berenice. The Arabs will not go near these ruins, as they say they contain devils. On showing Seyed Mahomed the pictures in "Lepsius's Book of Meroe," he immediately said that the devils in the valley of Haiet were the same, which would point to them as being old Egyptian. Ruins can also be traced from the Wady Haiet to the Nile, between Korosko and Assouan, indicating that in olden times there was another road used from the Nile to Berenice, as well as that that runs north-westerly from Berenice to the Kenh Cosseir road.

The next large mountain ranges north are the Erba Mountains, which I visited last December, the eastern drainage from which joins the sea by the Yemena valley at Baidib; the northern drainage, *vid* Khor Gumatcheou, at Dongonab, at the head of Roweyah Bay. The

western drainage of the Erba Mountains runs towards Wady Haiet.

The chain of mountains that runs parallel to the coast from Halaib to Erkoweet is continuous. The high groups are named, which are the conspicuous landmarks : Elba Mountains, Bishareen Asortriba, Harb, Erba, Salak, Bowartie group (including Orda and Melagueb), Amara Asortriba, Singat, and Erkoweet.

The coast road north from Suakim is as follows, the distance named in hours for camels laden with merchandise. The road is by no means straight, and as usual winds about, which makes the distance much greater. There is no way of arriving at distances really travelled in the Soudan by camels. For instance, the distance to Sheik Barghut from Suakim is about 32 miles, but it takes a laden camel a good 20 hours to make the journey, or say  $3\frac{1}{2}$  marches of 6 hours ; taking a heavy-laden camel's pace at  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles per hour, it would give 45 miles. The marches are called "shids"—that is to say, the time that the act of loading and unloading takes ; and all along distances are divided into so many shids or marches of about six hours' duration. The word "khor" is equivalent to the Indian nullah. "Wady" means a valley, but the Arabs make little distinction between the two words. For instance, they use the word "khor" in Khor Barca, which is the largest valley in the Eastern Soudan.

#### NORTHERN COAST ROAD.

Suakim

to

Tobain ..... 2 hours. No water.

to

Khor Handub ..... 2 ,, No water in Khor till Handub is reached.

to

Khor Hambokeb ..... 4 ,, No water.

to

Khor Aquat ..... 4 ,, Bitter water. Brackish at Gezirat Abdullah, and again at Saloun, under mountains sixteen miles.

Khor Agoiquam .....	3 hours.	No water.
to		
Khor Mog .....	5 „	Sheik Barghut, good water.
to		
Khor Segiet .....	4 „	One well, good water.
to		
Wady Misrar.....	12 „	No water.
to		
Khor Arbat .....	12 „	Plenty good water at upper, lower, and middle Duroor, Mersa Duroor.
to		
Khor Garo Hadal...	4 „	No water.
to		
Wady Hemei.....	8 „	No water.
to		
Khor Gara Era .....	8 „	Plenty good water at Bir Ait, nine miles up Khor. Brackish water all down Khor, and fair water at Bela, one mile from harbour Mersa Awi Teri and Mersa Arakeeyah; latter brackish water.
to		
Wady Zakenhelt.....	24 „	Very brackish water at Fanoidig, nine miles from well at Arakeeyah.
to		
Debadeb .....	24 „	Well very brackish and bitter water on sea beach. Nearest fresh water twenty miles off at Khor Salaka in hills.
to		
Khor Muccafiel .....	4 „	No water.
to		
Mahomed Ghoul .....	4 „	Brackish water at Bela, three miles; Yemena, seven miles; and good water at Hardi, ten miles in Khor Hardi.
or		
Roweyah.		

Mahomed Ghouli is the head quarters of the salt trade from the Roweyah salterns, and used to be and still is now a great slave emporium, and the nearest point on the Soudan coast to Jeddah. There are two roads that run from here to Berber *via* Ariab.

The great feature of the whole country north is its sameness. After having seen thirty miles of it the rest, one may say, is merely a repetition. It is, however, of a rolling and varied nature. Stretches of flat country or miniature plains divide the different khors, in the vicinity of which the face of the land is more irregular, and more vegetation is met with, consisting of several sorts of mimosas, casurinas, aloes, camel thorn, and other desert trees. The three most wooded khors are those of Mog Arbat, Gara Era, and that of Debadeb; the latter is a most curious collection of vegetation in a depression with abrupt sides, which is fully one hundred feet lower than the plain of Zakenhelt which surrounds it. There are no wells in the depression, which is of irregular formation, and is about seven miles long by from half to two miles broad. After heavy rains the water accumulates and may last for three months, when it is the resort of all the neighbouring tribes with their flocks. At Khor Arbat the trees are very fine, especially the casurinas, which give a delightful shade. This is the only true oasis on the great northern road.

All the country through which the great northern road runs provides, with very little exception, good grazing after the rains and during the winter time. During the summer heats a few animals, mostly camels and goats, remain in the wadys and khors in the vicinity of the wells, but the majority go to the hills and to the country round Wady Haïet. The nature of the soil is firm, and there is very little sand, comparatively speaking. In all the water-courses there is plenty of Tabas, or Giant Grass, the great food of all the flocks. After rains there is plenty of verdure, consisting of grasses of many sorts, flowers, wild thyme and peppermint, and other desert plants. In Khors Arbat and Gara Era there is some little cultivation of dhurra and dukkan, the native grains, a little tobacco, and a few vegetables and melons are also grown. Cotton is not met with north of Suakim, but would



grow well in Khor Arbat. There is no system of irrigation in either of the two big khors, the same as in all the Eastern Soudan; the ground once being saturated by the water flowing from the hills is enough to bring grain to maturity, although no rain may fall from the time the grain is planted till it is ripe.

The rise from the sea to the hills is to the eye quite imperceptible, but, as a rule, the height of the plain above sea level, at the foot of the hills, is from 200 to 600 feet. The plain is from eight to twenty miles broad. The hills near the coast are mostly of metamorphic formation, and in some parts of the plain the coral formation juts out of the soil, and in other places it is found up to the foot of the hills, and fine specimens of the brain and other corals may be traced, which do not look as if they had been the countless ages in their place, but more as if they had been recently brought from the sea.

The country throughout, with the exception of a few stony tracts, could be made fertile and cultivated if water was procurable, or dams made across the valleys to store the drainage from the mountains. The Zakenhelt desert, which runs from Khor Gara Era to Mahomed Ghoul, in winter time, after the rains, has also excellent grazing on it, but in summer time it is entirely parched up, and is most dangerous to cross, on account of the heat and sand-storms, there being no drinking water from Bir Ait in Khor Gara Era till Mahomed Ghoul is reached, a distance of over sixty miles.

The distribution of salt and fresh water is very curious. In some khors the wells are all brackish, while in others it is quite fresh. The only places where good drinking water is procurable close to the coast are at Sheik Barghut and Mursa Duroor. The nearest point to sea is at Bir Ait, nine miles up Khor Gara Era. Brackish water extends in some cases to nearly twenty miles from the sea coast, and the wells are far above the sea level.

The whole northern road, with a very little trouble, might be made available for wheeled traffic.

The road north again from Mahomed Ghoul as far as Halaïb is also good. It runs close to the sea the whole way and is of the same

formation and description as that between Suakim and Mahomed Ghoul.

Mahomed Ghoul

to			
Khor Gumatcheu...	12 hours.	Dongenab.	Water brackish, good
to			water to be obtained up Khor.
Shinab .....	12 „		Good water and plenty of trees, wells
to			called Zellala. Shinab harbour.
Khor Halaga .....	1 „		A small Khor with brackish water.
to			
Khor Heba .....	1½ „		Water brackish.
to			
Bir Delaweb .....	1 „		Water good.
to			
Khor Hebequan .....	1 „		Plenty good water three miles up
to			Khor.
Khor Gabateet .....	1 „		Brackish water.
to			
Khor Fordequan ...	1 „		No water.
to			
Meroub .....	2 „		Good trees and harbour, water
to			brackish.
Bir Bela .....	3 „		Good trees and water, good har-
to			bour.
Khor Equan .....	2 „		Brackish water.
to			
Mersa Halaïb .....	4 „		Good harbour and plenty of wells,
			in some of which the water is
			good and in others brackish.

The whole road from Mahomed Ghoul to Mersa Halaïb is very good, and there are no difficulties in the way.

The roads from Mahomed Ghoul to the interior are as follows. They are used mostly by the slave-dealers and the contraband trade from the Arabian side. The goods that go up and down these roads, also those

from Awi Teri, do not trouble the Custom Houses of Jeddah or Suakim.

Mahomed Ghoul

to		
Hardi.....	4 hours.	} 42 hours.
to		
Zellalnawareet .....	6 „	
to		
Adarshe.....	8 „	
to		} 128 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
Selalat .....	24 „	
to		
Rumi .....	12 „	
to		
Timli .....	12 „	
to		
Wady Hayu .....	12 „	
to		
Dumdum .....	30 „	
to		
Khor Amore.....	15 „	
to		
Mowa.....	6 „	
to		
Shire .....	22 „	
to		
Tehebia .....	12 „	
to		
Bir Konshateet.....	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	
to		
Gueraowait, the wells at		
Ariab.....	1 „	

Or from Mahomed Ghoul to Ariab, 165 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours, or say as near as possible 28 "shids," or about 15 days' march.

The following is a description of the march and the road on leaving Mahomed Ghoul : Khor Gumatcheu is reached in ten hours, passing Bir Hardi after four hours, where drinking water is obtained for march ; on striking Khor Gumatcheu there is a very deep well of brackish water, Zellalnawareet by name, water in small quantities. The road runs more north of west to escape rising the Erba mountains. Khor Gumatcheu is ten hours' march in length after the Khor is passed. Adarshe well is reached in Khor Adarshe. There is an unlimited supply of water in this well, but very bitter. Travellers either take their supplies at Hardi on one side or Selalat on the other. Hardi and Zellalnawareet belong to the Kourbab tribes ; Adarshe to the Kelabs.

After leaving Adarshe, the march is for two days in Wady Sassa, without water. After Sassa is finished, Khor Da-yet is reached, and the well Selalat is come to. At Selalat there is plenty of good water, and many shady trees and grass. There are large flocks of sheep, goats, and camels. The place is an oasis. The well belongs to the Kelabs. Sheik Achmed Mahomed Ali.

After leaving Selalat, the road branches into two. The lower road, or southern, is rather nearer, and follows for twelve hours the Khor Da-yet. It then, after leaving Da-yet, goes up the mountain called Rumi, and then down to the wells at the base of the mountain, where there is plenty of good water. There are then three hills to go up and down, and in twelve hours' further march in Wady Hashaquan, the Khor Haiet is reached, and the well Timli. Rumi belongs to the Kelabs ; Timli to the Silma-Hequal tribe, Othman Sheik. The Silma are under Adam Sadoun, brother of Mahomed Adam Sadoun, one of the great leaders of the rebel cause, who was killed by the friendly Arabs.

Leaving Timli, the road runs from Wady Haiet to Wady Hayu, twelve hours' march along a good road. There is running water the whole year round in Wady Hayu, trees, grass, cattle in large numbers, and the water is very good. The trees in Wady Haiet and Wady Hayu are chiefly the sycamore fig, which are very valuable, the wood

being used to make plates, bowls, pillows, and camel saddles used by the natives. Wady Hayu belongs to the Abdulhemab tribe, under Adam Sadoun and Hequal Othman.

After passing Wady Hayu, Wady Derab is reached, and followed for a day and a half the road is good, but there is no water. The wady belongs to the Abdulhamanab tribe, also under Adam Sadoun. Then the well Dumdum is reached in Khor Medbabeet after another day's march, where there is plenty of good water. Dumdum belongs to the Arab Esayab and the Ashrufs.

After leaving Dumdum, three hours' march in Wady Gose, then Wady Malale is entered, then six hours' march; then Khor Amore in six hours, where there is plenty of water in wells, and also running water. Khor Amore is a big oasis, where dhurra is grown. Khor Amore belongs to the Moosayab, the head of the tribe of Amarars. There is no water in Khors Gose and Malale, therefore the road from Dumdum to Amore is 15 hours without water. Khor Amore runs from above Odrus, takes the drainage of the Haritree on the Suakim-Berber route to Abu Hammed, where the outflow joins the Nile.

Wady Melale is about two days by dromedary from Odrus, and about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to five with laden camels. Khor Amore to Khor AdarowEEP is six hours' march, when well Mowa is reached. There is plenty of water at Mowa, but it is not very sweet. Khor AdarowEEP is followed for ten hours, and then Khor Agwamt for six; six hours further over the plain Bir Shire is reached, under Jebel Hararatab, where there is plenty of good water. From Shire to Khor Ekid, *vid* foot of Jebel Hararatab, Bir Tehebie is reached in twelve hours, where there is also plenty of good water. Bir Tehebie to Khor Ariab is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, where Bir Konshateet is arrived at; plenty of good water. Bir Konshateet is one hour's distance from the wells at Ariab, on the Suakim-Berber road, which are called Gueraowait. From Gueraowait wells at Ariab the road to Berber is the same as in the Intelligence maps. The road from Mahomed Ghoul to Ariab is a good one the whole way, and more fertile and better watered than from Suakim to Ariab.

The following is the road to the north from Selalat to Guer-aowait :—

Selalat		Sararat Amore .....	24 hours.
to		to	
Bir Shah.....	12 hours.	Bir Konshateet .....	26 „
to		to	
Bir Hebeb .....	12 „	Bir Gueraowait .....	1 „
to			<hr/>
Bir Ekok .....	24 „		141 „
to		Mahomed Ghoul	
Tomala .....	6 „	to	
to		Selalat .....	42 „
To-eglim.....	12 „		<hr/>
to			183 hours,
Sararat Wariou .....	14 „		or 15½ days' march.
to			

There is very little choice between the two roads. Serarat Amore well to Khor Amore, where the road from Dumdum runs in, is about 12 hours' ride.

After leaving Selalat a wady is entered, following which for twelve hours Bir Shah in Khor Shah is reached. The khor belongs to the Kelab and Miniya tribes. The water is good and plentiful. Much grass, trees, and shade. After leaving Bir Shah the road is for twelve hours across the plain to Bir Hebeb. Bir Hebeb belongs to the Manofolab and Miniya tribes. The water here is very good and in large quantities. Trees mostly acacia. From Bir Hebeb the road goes to Khor Haïet across the plain for two days, and goes through ground that is cultivated after the rains. The water is about six miles off from the road at Khor Ekok, which is full of large shady sycamore fig trees. Ekok belongs to the Miniya tribes. The wells and settlement of Ekok are south of the road. Following Khor Haïet for six hours Khor Tomala is reached, where there is running water the whole year round. There are few trees, but plenty of camel bush. Khor Tomala is followed for twelve hours, when Bir To-eglim

is reached ; the water is good and in large quantities. Tomala belongs to the Henna Barequeen, a small Bishareen tribe under Sheik Taher Gueli. This is the only place on the road where the Bishareens come in, and the Henna Barequeen have intermarried largely with the Amarars. To-eglim belongs to the Kourbab-Omern Sheik, Mahomed Nuffus. Leaving To-eglim, in two hours Khor Maharag is reached, which is followed for twelve hours, with no water *en route*, when Khor Wariou is come to, where there is a very deep well called Sararat. The well is in the bed of the Khor. Khor Maharag belongs to the Shebab tribe. There is a plentiful supply of water at Sararat, and much vegetation, large trees, and grass. It belongs to the Moosayab Sheik, Hamed Mahmoud. Sararat is under Jebel Irbie, a very big mountain. From Sararat to Khor Amore is twenty-four hours' march across the plain, without water, when another well, called Sararat, is reached, which has also plenty of good water and many acacia trees. Sararat Amore belongs to the Kourbab Guerra Sheik, Mahomed Haj. From Sararat to Khor Ariab, to the well Konshateet, is three days' march across the plain without water. From Sararat Amore there is a direct road to Obak, which is six days' march. The road is all across the plain, no water *en route*. The plain is intersected with many small khors, and in some of them, after the rains, at Gebel Guerat, half-way between Sararat and Obak, water can be obtained ; there is no permanent supply. This road is not a caravan route, and is never used by the slavers. Sararat to Obak can be ridden in two days on a good dromedary. Both roads, from Mahomed Ghoult to Ariab, are used by the merchants. The only hill to go up and down from Selalat to Sararat is a small one in the Khor Maharag, between there and Sararat Wariou.

The road from the coast, which is most used by the Arabs, and what may be called the great Amarar road to the interior, starts from Bir Ait in Khor Gara Era. Bir Ait is about equidistant from the harbours of Mersa Arakeeyah, Awi Teri, and the saltern of Dara ; distance from each, three hours. From the coast to

Bir Ait.....	3 hours.	Bir Medabeest .....	11 hours.
to		to	
Bir Elief .....	4 „	Bir Humeum (Amore) 8 „	
to		to	
Bir Hoyef .....	18 „	Bir Mowa.....	2 „
to		to	
Bir Gumachu .....	6 „	Bir Shire .....	22 „
to		to	
Khor Haiet .....	6 „	Bir Tehebie .....	12 „
to		to	
Bir Humeum (Eyob) 5 „		Bir Konshateet.....	1½ „
to		to	
Bir Shashu .....	1 „	Bir Gueraowait .....	1 „
to			
Bir Sararat (Agatero) 4 „			104½ „

Or say nearly nine days' travelling, or five days easily by dromedary.

From the coast to Bir Ait is three hours, where there is plenty of good water. The wells are in the bed of the khor, just before getting to Bir Ait. There is a narrow cutting, about fifty yards wide, made by the floods coming down the Gara Era; flood-mark is fully twenty feet high in the narrowest part, and the amount of water that comes down after heavy rains must be considerable. After passing this cutting the waters spread out in a fan shape towards the coast, saturating a large tract of country, on which dhurra is grown. Bir Ait belongs to the Gedaloib Sheik, Omer Hamed Lahai. Leaving Bir Ait, Bir Elief is reached in four hours. Bir Elief is still in Khor Gara Era, and belongs to the Merhasiab tribe. This was the most western point reached by Osman Digna's dervishes, and where they were blockaded by the Amarars and forced to retire after losing many of their men, killed by the tribesmen and from smallpox.

Leaving Bir Elief, Bir Hoyef is reached in eighteen hours; the road is very stony but not difficult travelling. Hoyef is in Khor Nakaseeb, which runs between Gebel Gumedrybab and Gebel Hermashoweb, the latter south and the former north of the road. These two mountains are large outlying peaks of the Bowartie-Melagueb group. Hoyef belongs to the Aliab Esayab tribe.

Leaving Hoyef, a hill called Nakaseeb has to be gone up, which is not difficult, and going down it Khor Dumaquok is reached in two hours. From Khor Dumaquok, Khor Segie is entered, and well



Gunachu is reached in four hours, where there is plenty of water, the road good and level ; the country still belongs to the Aliab Esayab.

From Gunachu to Khor Haïet is six hours across a good road, where there is plenty of good water and many sycamore fig trees. The wells are all close together and most numerous, each house or family owning several. These wells all belong to the Ashrufs. From the coast to Haïet is three days by camel ; a good dromedary can get over the ground in twelve hours.

From the Ashrufs' settlement to Bir Timli, on the Mahomed Ghoul-Ariab road is four days ; by dromedary two days. Water is found for the three first days about every hour as far as Bir Kataweb, and from Bir Lataweb to Timli one day without water. Grain is largely grown after rains in this district.

From Khor Haïet to Khor Le-eyeb, three hours' march over a good road brings one to a small hill called Togyar, which has to be gone up ; going down this hill Khor Eyob is reached, which is followed for two hours till Bir Humeum is come to. The water is brackish but in large quantities, and pleasant shade from the hegleck, nubuck, and other trees. Leaving Bir Humeum one hour's march Bir Shashu is come to, with sweet water in large quantities. From Bir Shashu to Bir Sararat, in Khor Agatero, there are many trees along the road, which is four hours' march. From Bir Sararat the road runs for four hours in Khor Agatero till Wady Derab is reached ; the road is up hill, and it is seven hours' march from Wady Agatero to Bir Medabeet in Wady Gose, where there is always a small supply of sweet water. Bir Medabeet is four hours' march from Bir Dumdum, both of which are in Wady Medabeet. Wady Gose runs from Wady Medabeet. After leaving Bir Medabeet, Wady Amore is reached in eight hours and Bir Humeum. After leaving Bir Humeum, two hours' march brings one to Bir Mowa, and the road is the same as the southern road to Ariab from Mahomed Ghoul.

Of the four roads from the coast to Ariab, that that runs to Awi Teri is the best. It is a true Amarat road, there being neither Bishareens nor Hadendowas along it. It is fertile and well wooded, and there is plenty of water *en route*.

## APPENDIX.

### III.

#### TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN, EGYPT, AND ABYSSINIA.

*Signed at Adowa, June 3, 1884.*

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Johannis, made by the Almighty King of Sion Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia and its Dependencies, and His Highness Mahomed Tewfik, Khedive of Egypt, being desirous of settling the differences which exist between the said Johannis, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia, and Mahomed Tewfik, Khedive of Egypt, and of establishing an everlasting peace between them, have agreed to conclude a Treaty for this purpose, which shall be binding on themselves, their heirs, and successors; and Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, having appointed as her Representative Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewett, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's ships of war in the East Indies, and His Majesty the Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia, acting on his own behalf, and His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, having appointed as his Representative His Excellency Mason Bey, Governor of Massowah, they have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles :—

*Article I.*

From the date of the signing of this Treaty there shall be free transit through Massowah, to and from Abyssinia, for all goods, including arms and ammunition, under British protection.

*Article II.*

On and after the 1st day of September, 1884, corresponding to the 8th day of Maskarram, 1877, the country called Bogos shall be restored to His Majesty the Negoosa Negust; and when the troops of His Highness the Khedive shall have left the garrisons of Kassala, Amedib, and Sanhit, the buildings in the Bogos country which now belong to His Highness the Khedive, together with all the stores and munitions of war which shall then remain in the said buildings, shall be delivered to and become the property of His Majesty the Negoosa Negust.

*Article III.*

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust engages to facilitate the withdrawal of the troops of His Highness the Khedive from Kassala, Amedib, and Sanhit through Ethiopia to Massowah.

*Article IV.*

His Highness the Khedive engages to grant all the facilities which His Majesty the Negoosa Negust may require in the matter of appointing Aboonas for Ethiopia.

*Article V.*

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust and His Highness the Khedive engage to deliver up, the one to the other, any criminal or criminals who may have fled, to escape punishment, from the dominions of the one to the dominions of the other.

*Article VI.*

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust agrees to refer all differ-

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ences with His Highness the Khedive which may arise after the signing of this Treaty to Her Britannic Majesty for settlement.

*Article VII.*

The present Treaty shall be ratified by Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and by His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, and the ratification shall be forwarded to Adowa as soon as possible.

In witness whereof Rear-Admiral Sir W. Hewett, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty the Negoosa Negust on his own behalf, and His Excellency Mason Bey on behalf of His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, have signed and affixed their seals to this Treaty, made at Adowa, the 3rd day of June, 1884, corresponding to the 27th day of Goonnet, 1876.

(King's Seal.)

(L.S.)

W. HEWETT.

(L.S.)

MASON.

## APPENDIX.

### IV.

TREATY BETWEEN HER MAJESTY AND HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF  
ABYSSINIA FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

*Signed at Adowa, June 3, 1884.*

*[Ratified by Her Majesty, July 12, 1884.]*

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Johannis, made by the Almighty King of Sion, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia and its dependencies, being desirous of prohibiting and perpetually abolishing the Slave Trade, they have agreed to conclude a Treaty for this purpose, which shall be binding on themselves, their heirs, and successors; and to that end Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewett, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's ships of war in the East Indies, acting on the behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Johannis, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia, acting on his own behalf, they have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles :—

#### *Article 1.*

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust agrees to prohibit and to

prevent, to the best of his ability, the buying and selling of slaves within his dominions.

*Article II.*

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust agrees to prohibit and to prevent, to the best of his ability, the import or export of slaves to or from his dominions.

*Article III.*

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust engages to protect, to the utmost of his power, all liberated slaves, and to punish severely any attempt to molest them, or to reduce them again to slavery.

*Article IV.*

Her Britannic Majesty has made Treaties with many foreign States, by which it is permitted to her officers to seize all ships belonging to such foreign States engaged in the transport or conveyance of slaves upon the sea; and Her Majesty engages to liberate any subjects of His Majesty the Negoosa Negust who may be found detained as slaves in any ship captured by the officers of Her Majesty, and to take steps to send such subjects back to the dominions of His Majesty the Negoosa Negust.

*Article V.*

The present Treaty shall be ratified, and the ratification shall be forwarded to Adowa as soon as possible.

In witness whereof, Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewett, on the behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and Johannis, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia, on his own behalf, have signed the same, and (or) have affixed their seals to this Treaty, made at Adowa the 3rd

*APPENDIX.*

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day of June, 1884, corresponding to the 27th day of Goonvet,  
1876.

(L.S.)

(Seal of the King of Abyssinia.)

(L.S.)

W. HEWETT.

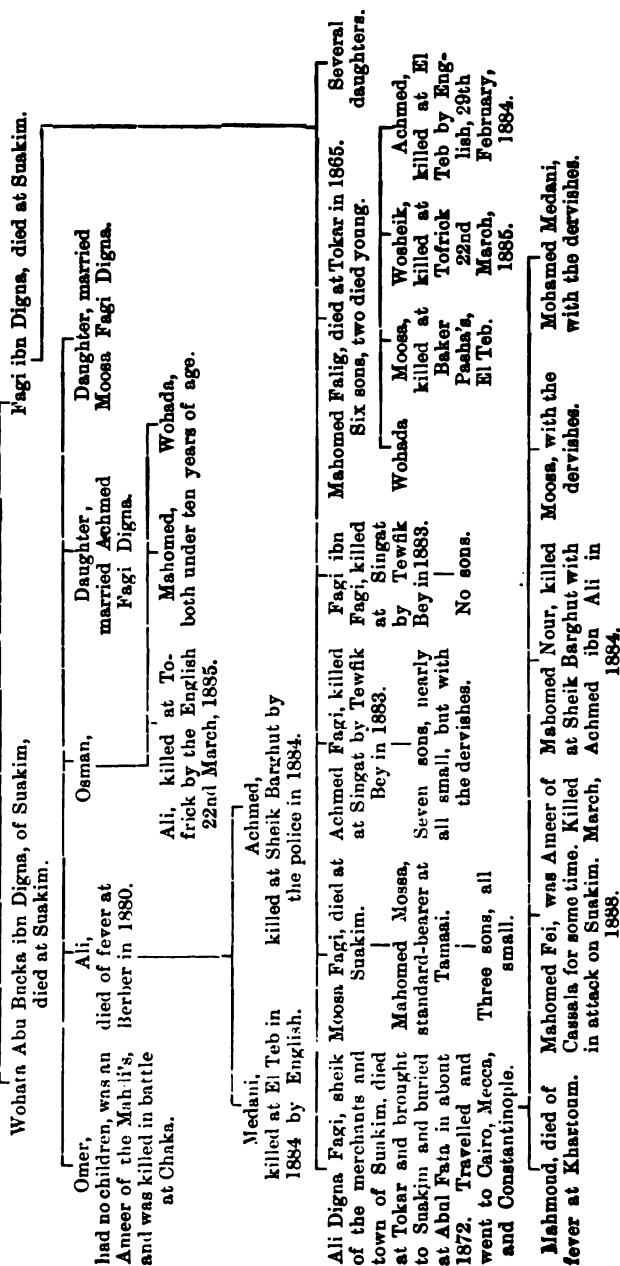
N.B.—We have had no representative at Massowah to carry  
out this Treaty.

## APPENDIX.

## V.

Over 300 years ago Osman Digna's ancestors, who were Arnauts from Constantinople, settled at Suakim. They intermarried with the Hadendowie-Turqui Tribe of Etkowet. They are now, as features, manners, and customs are concerned, irreconcilable from the inhabitants of the country. Tracing the present family, from Osman Digna's grandfather, will show how they have been mixed up with the disturbances round Suakim.

## DIGNA IBN DIGNA (Osman Digna's grandfather).





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